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**Accommodating Change: The Effect of the British
Takeover of the Cape of Good Hope on Social Elites,
c. 1795-1820**

by

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ABSTRACT

“Accommodating Change: The Effect of the British Takeover of the Cape of Good Hope on Social Elites, c. 1795-1820”

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The period of the turn of the nineteenth century saw several changes of government at the Cape: in 1795 the Cape was conquered by the British, in 1803 it reverted back to the control of the Netherlands, but was again conquered in 1806 by the British, whose control of the Colony was formalised in 1814. In 1795, when Britain conquered the Cape of Good Hope from the VOC, there existed a well-established Dutch burgher population with a clearly identifiable social and economic elite. A generation later, by c. 1820, there was a new social and economic elite with both English and Dutch families pre-eminent in the social and economic life of the Cape. This study looks at the reason for, and the mechanisms by which, some of the original Dutch burgher families survived this transition. British imperialism had at its heart the search for local collaborators in order to simplify the transitional process. Far from unseating the established landed elite, they entrenched their dominance through a system of collaboration and intermarriage. The study focusses on three prominent family complexes in order to determine the effects of the changes in regime on the established society. The Truter, Van Reenen and Cloete families serve as case studies in different spheres of society, illuminating this process of collaboration between prominent free burgher families and the British elite.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES.....	V
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	VI
GLOSSARY.....	VII
 CHAPTER 1	
Introduction	1
Literature Review	6
Methodology and Sources.....	12
 CHAPTER 2.....	
The Development of a Free-Burgher Elite during the VOC Era.....	19
The Process of Immigration to the Cape.....	21
Development of a Landed Elite	25
Development of the Urban Gentry.....	28
Social Networks	31
Elite in Power	34
 CHAPTER 3.....	
Transitional Governments at the Cape of Good Hope, 1795 – c. 1820.....	39
The First British Occupation, 1795-1803.....	40
Consolidation of Power	45
Changes in Policy	48
Batavian Government, 1803-1806	51
The Second British Occupation, 1806 -	56
 CHAPTER 4.....	
Mercantile Gentility: The Case of the Van Reenen Family.....	65
Jacob / Jacobus van Renen (b1).....	68

Cape Patriot Movement.....	70
Daniel van Reenen (b 3)	71
Third Generation - The Famous Van Reenen Brothers.....	75
Johannes (Jan) Gijsbertus van Reenen (b1c2)	75
Dirk Gijsbert van Reenen (b1c7)	79
Children of Dirk Gijsbert van Reenen.....	83
Jacob van Reenen (c8) 1755 - 1806	84
Children of Jacob van Reenen	85
 CHAPTER 5.....	
From VOC Supporters to British Collaborators: The Case of the Cloete Family	89
Inheritance through the female line	93
Hendrik Cloete (b4c2d2) – Owner of Groot Constantia.....	95
Constantia Wine.....	101
Sons of Hendrik Cloete Snr.....	103
Hendrik Cloete Jnr (b4c2d2e3)	103
Johan Gerhard Cloete (b4c2d2e4).....	104
Pieter Lourens Cloete (b4c2d2e6)	106
Sons of Pieter Lourens Cloete	108
Hendrik (Henry) Cloete.....	108
Sir Abraham Josias Cloete.....	110
 CHAPTER 6.....	
Administrative and Judicial Change at the Cape: The Case of the Truter Family	113
The Truter Family - A case of Judicial Collaborators.....	116
Hendrik Andries Truter (b5).....	117
Sir John (Johannes) Andries Truter (b5c1.....	118
Masonic Ties	124
The De Wet Extended Family	128
The Truter Cousins	130
Anna Maria Truter	130
Petrus Johannes Truter.....	132
 CHAPTER 7.....	
Conclusion	134

Bibliography	138
1. PRIMARY SOURCES	138
1.1 Manuscript Sources.....	138
1.2 Published Primary Sources	140
2. SECONDARY SOURCES	143
2.1 Published Articles, Chapters and Books	143
2.2 Unpublished Theses and Papers	153
2.3 Internet Sources.....	154



LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 4.1: Diagram indicating the marriages and children of Jacob van Reenen	66
Figure 4.2: Diagram indicating the descendants of Jacobus and Maria van Reenen	68
Figure 4.3: Painting of Aletta Catharina, the wife of Dirk van Reenen	79
Figure 4.4: Painting of the home of Dirk Gijsbert van Reenen at <i>Papenboom</i> .	81
Figure 4.5: Map surveying the property of Dirk van Reenen	83
Figure 4.6: Diagram indicating the descendants of Jacob van Reenen	85
Figure 5.1: Progenitor and first three generations of the Cloete family in South Africa	95
Figure 5.2: Portrait of Sibilla Loubscher	96
Figure 5.3: Portrait of Hester Anna (Lourens) Cloete	97
Figure 5.4: Sketch of Hendrik Cloete, c.1788	100
Figure 5.5: A sketch by Lady Anne Barnard of the Groot Constantia estate	102
Figure 5.6: Diagram showing the children of Hendrik Cloete senior	103
Figure 5.7: Captain Johan Gerhard Cloete, Commander of the Pandour Corps	106
Figure 5.8: Diagram of the children of Pieter Lourens Cloete	106
Figure 6.1: Diagram indicating the 14 children of Jan Andries Truter	116
Figure 6.2: Diagram of the children of Hendrik Andries Truter	118
Figure 6.3: Painting of Sir John Andries Truter	118
Figure 6.4: Painting of Anna Maria Truter, cousin of Sir John Truter	130

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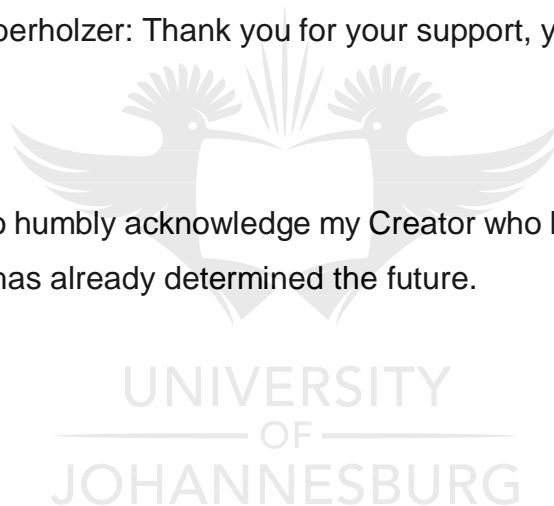
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GLOSSARY

Adelborst: Naval cadet or midshipman.

Buitepost: Outpost or service station, sometimes for defensive purposes.

Burgerraad: Translation: Burgher Council. Council of up to seven citizens responsible for civic affairs as instituted by the Dutch East India Company and dissolved in 1827 under the Second British Occupation.

Fiscaal: Title of the Chief Legal Officer of the settlement.

Free burgher: Early settlers of the Cape of Good Hope who were released from their employment contracts by the Dutch East India Company but remained their subjects.

Gulden: Also known as a Dutch Guilder. This was the official currency of the Netherlands and its overseas territories until the introduction of the Euro. In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, this was not an actual coin but a bookkeeping currency.

Heemraad / heemraden: Council assisting local magistrates (*landdrosten*) in the government of rural districts prior to the establishment of British administration.

Heeren XVII: Translation: Gentlemen Seventeen. The name of the board of directors of the Dutch East India Company (VOC).

Knecht: Male servant, normally of European descent and in charge of slave workers on a farm.

Legger: A liquid measure referring to a cask or barrel of wine containing about 577 litres.

Muid: A dry measure equivalent to about 109 litres.

Opgaaf: The annual return or account of livestock, produce and agricultural land for the purposes of taxation.

Pacht / Pachten: Lease granted by the Dutch East India Company allowing the owner or lessee the exclusive right of sale of a product for a set period. The retail of alcohol and meat at the Cape was controlled in this fashion.

Patriot / Patriotten: A Republican opponent of the House of Orange-Nassau during the second half of the eighteenth century. Members of this movement favoured centralisation and administrative change.

Plakaat / Plakaten: An edict or proclamation issued by the Council of Policy at the Cape of Good Hope during the rule of the Dutch East India Company.

Ratelwagt: Watchmen equipped with wooden rattles to raise alarm. They had to watch out for fire, public mischief, housebreaking, theft or other offences.

Rixdaalder: Rixdollar. A silver coin of the Netherlands, equal to 2½ guilders.

Scriba: Dutch Reformed Church position similar to a parish clerk or church secretary.

Secunde: Second in command at the Cape, in effect the deputy governor.

Stadtholder: Title of the head of state of the Dutch Republic in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, most often a Prince of Orange.

Taphuis: A tavern where wine or liquor for sale was kept on tap.

Vendu: Referring to public sale or auction. Vendu rolls are the records of public sales or auctions.

VOC: 'Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie'. Translation: United Dutch East India Company. Often referred to as simply 'the Company'.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

In 1795, when Britain conquered the Cape of Good Hope from the VOC, there existed a well-established Dutch burgher population with a clearly identifiable social and economic elite.¹ A generation later, by circa 1820, there was a new elite with both English and Dutch families pre-eminent in the social and economic life of the Cape. Some of these were families who maintained their positions across the various transitions of government, remaining firmly entrenched in the elite class despite various political changes that affected social and economic spheres. At the same time, after the First British Occupation (1795-1803), some of the prominent families disappeared into obscurity.

British imperialism had at its heart the search for local collaborators in order to ease the transitional process. Far from unseating the established landed elite, the agents of British imperialism often entrenched their dominance through a system of collaboration and intermarriage with local populations.² It appears as if the same system of collaboration through means of intermarriage occurred at the Cape following the British Occupation. This hypothesis will be explored through a study of three prominent burgher family networks, who operated in different spheres of colonial society. The study will trace the effect that the transitional governments had on settled social and economic life at the Cape. By means of exploring their family networks, the study will reveal that despite an initial degradation of Dutch social life and culture, most of the Cape Dutch burgher elite were prepared to accommodate British rule – mainly because of the benefits they could gain from association

¹ The concept 'elite' has several meanings depending on its context, cf. S. Moffat, & B. Freund, 'Elite Formation and Elite Bonding: Social Structure and Development in Durban', *Urban Forum* 15, 2 (2004), 135-40. In this thesis, the term will be used as it has been developed over the past generation by Cape historians in referring to a group of burghers who obtained economic and social pre-eminence through investments in land, slaves and by entrepreneurial activities. Following Robert Ross, they are often referred to as the 'Cape Gentry', although the use of this term has been challenged, see G. Williams, 'Who, Where and When were the Cape Gentry?', *Economic History of Developing Regions* 28, 2 (2013), 83-111.

² W. Dooling, 'The Making of a Colonial Elite: Property, Family and Landed Stability in the Cape Colony, c 1750-1834', *Journal of South African Studies* 31, 1 (2005), 151 and W. Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule in South Africa* (UKZN Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2007), 16-57.

with the new government elite.³ This was despite what may appear to have been a general feeling of resentment towards the British occupiers, particularly after the Second British Occupation (1803) when it became clear that the situation was likely to be permanent.

The turn of the nineteenth century saw several changes of government at the Cape: in 1795 the British conquered the Cape; in 1803 it reverted to the control of The Netherlands (in the guise of the Batavian Republic), but was again conquered in 1806 by the British, whose control of the Colony was formalised in 1814. Whilst Cape society during the final years of the VOC rule and the period after the Second British occupation (especially after 1820) has been widely studied, not much research has been done on the decades of transition falling *between* these two periods.⁴ Moreover, relatively little research has been done on the maintenance of elite status or the transmission of status over generations. As Wayne Dooling and Robert Ross have argued,⁵ it seems likely that there was significant continuity amongst large landed families through the eighteenth century and deep into the nineteenth century, yet it is not at all clear how and why such continuity was maintained, or what factors encouraged or undermined it. Neither is it obvious why certain families were more likely to succeed in maintaining this status while others did not.⁶ This study aims to address these lingering questions, and attempts to understand how changing social and economic factors influenced lived reality during this period of political upheaval.

By the 1780s and 1790s, society at the Cape of Good Hope had changed significantly from the relatively homogeneous population that settled at the Cape in 1652. The free burgher population settled into one of two roles: Firstly, there were those urban free burghers who made a living by providing various services and retail opportunities to the large transient population Cape Town hosted annually.⁷ The second group consisted of those free burghers

³ R. Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony 1750-1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999), 45-50.

⁴ An exception being W. Freund, 'The Cape under Transitional Governments, 1795-1814', in R. Elphick & H. Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840* (2nd edition, Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town, 1989) although this chapter is largely concerned with broader political and economic changes rather than with elite formation as such.

⁵ Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule*; R. Ross, 'The Rise of the Cape Gentry', *Journal of South African Studies* 9, 2 (1983), 193-217.

⁶ Dooling, 'Making of a Colonial Elite'.

⁷ G. Groenewald, 'Entrepreneurs and the Making of a Free Burgher Society', in N. Worden (ed.), *Cape Town between East and West: Social Identities in a Dutch Colonial Town* (Jacana & Verloren, Johannesburg & Hilversum, 2012), 45-64.

who farmed and in this way provided the VOC and Cape Town with the fresh produce it needed.⁸ The annual *opgaaf* (taxation) rolls do not make any distinction between those free burghers who lived in urban areas and those who were settled in the immediate rural areas. Despite this general division, many of the wealthier settlers were initially farmers who made their money in agriculture before investing in urban properties, and vice versa.⁹ Robert Ross describes the rich free burgers in the immediate hinterland of Cape Town as the 'landed gentry'.¹⁰ Ross's argument for the existence of a 'landed gentry' is based on the expansion of viticulture and grain production between 1720 and 1750, with a concomitant growth in territorial agriculture and the economy. He further asserts that the enterprising farmers who managed to bring more land under production were the ones who became prosperous by the 1780s. However, by the final years of the eighteenth century, this group was not mutually exclusive from the rich urban-based burghers, nor from the VOC official elite. Inter-marriage had resulted in the establishment of a distinct group of elite burghers with interests in mercantile activities, politics and agriculture.¹¹

On the political side, however, the VOC remained the governing power of the colony, with relatively little participation from the free-burgher population, which increasingly caused feelings of resentment. The so-called Patriot Movement of the late 1770s to the early 1780s was the greatest challenge by the burgher population of the control of Company officials.¹² Political developments in Europe, and the effects of the local situation, resulted in the



⁸ Cf. L. Oberholzer, 'Free Burgher Women in the Eighteenth Century and the Quest for Status', *Historia* 62, 1 (2017), 3.

⁹ L. Guelke, 'Freehold Farmers and Frontier Settlers, 1657-1780', in R. Elphick & H. Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840* (2nd edition, Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town, 1989), 190; G. Groenewald, 'An Early Modern Entrepreneur: Hendrik Oostwald Eksteen and the Creation of Wealth in Dutch Colonial Cape Town', *Kronos: Southern African Histories* 35, 1 (2009), 7-31.

¹⁰ Ross, 'Rise of the Cape Gentry'.

¹¹ G. Groenewald, 'Dynasty Building, Family Networks and Social Capital: Alcohol *Pachters* and the Development of a Colonial Elite at the Cape of Good Hope, c. 1760-1790', *New Contree* 62 (2011), 23-53 and Guelke, 'Freehold Farmers and Frontier Settlers', 190.

¹² C. Beyers, *Die Kaapse Patriotte gedurende die Laaste Kwart van die Agtiende Eeu, en die Voortlewing van hul Denkbeelde* (Juta, Pretoria, 1967); T. Baartman, 'Protest and Dutch Burgher Identity', in N. Worden (ed.), *Cape Town between East and West: Social Identities in a Dutch Colonial Town* (Jacana & Verloren, Johannesburg & Hilversum, 2012).

circulation of propaganda pamphlets, letters and books amongst Cape burghers.¹³ The ideas behind the Patriot Movement were inspired by philosophers and writers such as Adam Smith, Jean Jacques Rousseau and other Enlightenment figures. This resulted in resistance against, and even the rejection of the VOC's control.¹⁴ The very existence of the Patriot Movement indicates that by the final years of VOC rule at the Cape, burgher society became dissatisfied with their position of subservience and attempted to break the hold on power held by the VOC.

Many of the VOC officials and burgher elite intermarried and formed a more homogeneous elite where status and family ties were closely interwoven. Interestingly enough this pattern of intermarriage between the burgher elite and the government elite (in this instance, VOC officials) had already existed before 1795.¹⁵ Numerous studies on status and the role of social status in marriage, and the ways in which a woman's status was linked to that of her husband have been done. It appears as if this culture of intermarriage with the government elite continued after the First British Occupation. At the Cape, as elsewhere in the colonial world, there existed a strong relationship between marriage, status and power.¹⁶ This does not, however, mean that there was no social hierarchy: differentiation concerning position and power was still very much in existence, even when civil positions were created that held some social prestige but little real political power. Because of the intermarriage between the free-burgher population and the VOC official elite, especially towards the end of VOC rule at the Cape, the social and economic position and the prominence of many free burghers grew immensely, but there was little promise of gaining actual political position and power. In effect, burgher society became both more socially equal and more dissatisfied towards the end of the eighteenth century.

¹³ Cf. A.L. Dick, 'Reading Authors of the Enlightenment at the Cape of Good Hope from the Late 1780s to the Mid 1830s', *Journal of Southern African Studies* 44, 3 (2018), 383-400.

¹⁴ W. A Dreyer, 'South Africa: The Early Quest for Liberty and Democracy', *HTS Teologiese Studies / Theological Studies* 71, 3 (2015).

¹⁵ Cf. R. Ross & A. Schrikker, 'The VOC Official Elite', in N. Worden, (ed.), *Cape Town between East and West: Social Identities in a Dutch Colonial Town* (Jacana & Verloren, Cape Town & Hilversum, 2012).

¹⁶ Dooling, 'Making of a Colonial Elite'; M. Hall, 'The Secret Lives of Houses: Women and Gables in the Eighteenth Century Cape', *Social Dynamics* 20, 1 (1994) and Groenewald, 'Dynasty Building, Family Networks and Social Capital'. Cf. Jean Gelman Taylor, *The Social World of Batavia: Europeans and Eurasians in Colonial Indonesia* (2nd edition, Madison WI, 2009) for the situation in other parts of the Dutch colonial world.

Following the Second British Occupation (after 1806), the British were initially slow to introduce legal changes at the Cape. They gradually started modifying aspects of Cape law to conform to British models and, for certain sections of the population, the economic conditions improved considerably as monopolies were abolished. Colonial merchants gained access to international markets and, on the whole, the relations between the burgher class and the new colonisers were cordial.¹⁷ Before 1820, the white population of the Cape Colony was almost entirely Dutch with the only British residents being civil servants, some merchants in Cape Town, the staff of the naval arsenal in Simon's Town and a handful of missionaries.¹⁸ Despite the relatively small number of British living at the Cape, a distinct pattern of intermarriage with the existing elite at the Cape did occur. Examples of this intermarriage of the new political and government elite with the existing social elite at the Cape can be found in the Truter, Van Reenen and Cloete families, among others. These prominent families functioned as the links between the government and the established white farming community, since some of their members tended to remain in office no matter which newly arrived European group was in power. They provided a degree of continuity across the troubled period of war when the Cape had four different governments within a decade and a half,¹⁹ but also they were able to help incorporate the newcomers, whether British or Batavian, to the existing local gentry.²⁰

The central question this study investigates is: What was the effect of this period of governmental change on the established Dutch colonial elite residing at the Cape? Why, and how, did some of the original elite Dutch burgher families survive this complex series of transitions? In short, how did the British imperialism apparatus integrate the existing Cape burgher elite after occupation? What is clear from the historiography is that this change

¹⁷ U.A. Seeman, 'The British Military Occupation of the Cape, 1795-1815: The Case of the York Redoubt' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 2001), 32; R. Ross, 'The Cape of Good Hope and the World Economy, 1652-1834', in R. Elphick & H. Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840* (2nd edition, Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town, 1989).

¹⁸ G.M. Theal, *The History of South Africa since 1795*, Volume 1 (Allen & Unwin, London, 1915), 346.

¹⁹ The wars referred to include the French Revolutionary Wars and the Napoleonic Wars. The French Revolutionary Wars were a series of military conflicts that were the result of the French Revolution. These wars lasted from 1792 to 1802 and were fought between France, Great Britain, the Holy Roman Empire, Prussia, Russia and several other monarchies. The Napoleonic Wars lasted between 1803 and 1815 and were a series of conflicts between the French Empire and a number of other European powers, led by Great Britain.

²⁰ W.M. Freund, 'Society and Government in Dutch South Africa: The Cape and the Batavians, 1803-6' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Yale University, 1971), 87.

occurred during the period between the rise of the 'Cape Gentry' and the decline of this group from the late 1830s onwards. Because of this existing knowledge, the study will also address the following questions: What were the social, economic and political effects of multiple regime changes and how did these affect the lives of those who held power in different spheres? Did the changes in regime have an effect on the eventual decline of the established elite at the Cape? To what an extent did cooperation between the established landed elite and the new government elite exist? To what extent did opposition to the government elite exist? How did regime change affect individuals as indicators of a greater social change? To what extent did traditional Dutch families become anglicised during this period? Was there a pattern of deliberate intermarriage between the established burgher elite with the new British elite? Did the Cape gentry truly decline from the 1830s onwards, or did a process of assimilation with the new elite simply give it that appearance, leading to new synergies? The study will look at these changes and interactions over two to three decades of unrest in order to determine what effect political changes had on the lives of established civilians at the Cape.

Literature Review

The historiography on the formation and development of the British Empire is vast. C.A. Bayly's classic study of the British Empire at the turn of the nineteenth century traces the expansion of British dominion overseas (particularly in Asia and the Middle East) during the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic eras that constitutes the central phase of British imperial history.²¹ This period was also the time that the Cape came under permanent British authority. Kirsten McKenzie's books, notably *Scandal in the Colonies*, investigate the Cape in its British imperial context, particularly focusing on what was perceived as accepted behaviour within the colonial context and the ways in which the imperial context facilitated the spread of information.²² The idea of socially accepted behaviour is also discussed in Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall's study on the ideologies and practices of the English middle class from the end of the eighteenth and up to the mid-nineteenth centuries.²³

²¹ C.A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World, 1780-1830* (Pearson, London, 1989).

²² K. McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies: Sydney and Cape Town, 1820-1850* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2004) and K. McKenzie, *A Swindler's Progress: Nobles and Convicts in the Age of Liberty* (University of New South Wales Press, Sydney, 2009).

²³ L. Davidoff & C. Hall, *Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class, 1780-1850* (University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2003).

In a wider colonial context, the idea of elite formation has been widely studied. Much academic work has been done on the history of other dominions within the colonial network of both the VOC and the British Empire. Ceylon (modern Sri Lanka) has a similar history of colonial dominance by both the Dutch and the British (both colonies passed into British hands in 1795). Thus, Alicia Schrikker investigated Dutch and British colonial intervention in Ceylon over the course of the change from Dutch colonial rule to British dominance in the area. She particularly traced the response of the British administration to the Dutch legacy and its effects during the transitional period.²⁴ Her work provides valuable insights into the change of regime within a changing colonial context. Hui Kian Kwee's study of the political economy of Java's northeast coast over the course of the last 60 years of the eighteenth century investigates the various role players in the political economy of this region.²⁵ Finally, the compilation of essays, *Au sommet de l'Empire: les européennes dans les colonies / At the top of the empire: European elites in the colonies* surveys the historiography of elites within various European colonial empires. The study investigates the broader colonial world that the Cape formed part of and will serve as comparative material for understanding the formation of colonial elites.

The thesis builds on insights derived from sociological theories regarding elite formation. This theoretical work is rooted in classical scholars of sociology such as Weber, Pareto, Mosca and Michels.²⁶ At the core of classical elitism is the idea of 'elite inevitability'. In this view, elites will always form an inevitable part of society. Therefore, one elite group can only be substituted by another set of elites, meaning that a minority rules the majority.²⁷ More recently, work has been done on elite formation within other colonial societies. In Richard Waterhouse's work on elite formation within South Carolina, we see a number of similarities with the situation at the Cape, amongst which is the formation of an elite group in the

²⁴ A. Schrikker, *Dutch and British Colonial Intervention in Sri Lanka, 1780-1815: Expansion and Reform* (Brill, Leiden, 2007).

²⁵ H.K. Kwee, *The Political Economy of Java's Northeast Coast, c. 1740-1800: Elite Synergy* (Brill, Leiden, 2005).

²⁶ G. Mosca, *The Ruling Class* (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1939); C. Laux, F. Ruggiu & P. Singaravelou (eds.), *Au Sommet de l'Empire: Les Elites Europeenes dans les colonies (XVIe-XXe Siecle) / At the Top of the Empire: European Elites in the Colonies, 16th-20th Century* (Peter Lang, Frankfurt am Main, 2009), 13-60.

²⁷ López, M., 'Elite Theory', *Sociopedia.isa* (online journal, 2013, doi: 10.1177/ 20568460131112), 2.

eighteenth century that served to ensure continuity throughout the change of government from Britain to the USA, and who had access to wealth and social status. Additionally this group also recruited new members into the existing elite.²⁸ In this regard, Norbert Elias's *The Civilizing Process* aids the researcher in better understanding the role of accepted patterns of behaviour in the formation of a society. Elias demonstrates that people learn to live according to a certain code of conduct, hence the development of manners and social etiquette within a specific social milieu.²⁹ Habermas's *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere* describes the development of a bourgeois public sphere in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries as well as its subsequent decline.³⁰ Habermas describes the social nature and foundations of public life, forming an indispensable part of the theoretical understanding of the society that existed at the Cape at the turn of the nineteenth century.

Within the South African context, the study of an elite burgher population at the Cape was pioneered by Robert Ross who called this group of wealthy burghers, the 'landed gentry'.³¹ Ross's pioneering work inspired intensive research on this group of burghers. Through work by scholars such as Ross, Leonard Guelke and Robert Shell, the idea of an established burgher elite has become well-entrenched in the historiography of the early colonial period.³² Ross's seminal study, titled 'The Rise of the Cape Gentry,' has led to numerous essays on the subject, including a number by Ross himself.³³ Guelke's and Shell's research on the Cape gentry has focused amongst other things on the issue of labour and slavery in relation to this group. Their article, 'An early colonial landed gentry: land and wealth in the Cape Colony, 1682-1731', investigated the emergence of a slave-owning gentry class dependent on cheap land and labour. Aspects of the development of this group have more recently

²⁸ P. Waterhouse, 'South Carolina's Colonial Elite: A Study of the Social Structure and Political Culture of a Southern Colony, 1670-1760' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Johns Hopkins University, 1973), 32.

²⁹ E. Elias, *The Civilizing Process: Sociogenetic and Psychogenetic Investigations* (Blackwell, London, 2000). His work has had a huge influence on Dutch historians working on early modern elites, e.g. P. Spierenburg, *Elites and Etiquette: Mentality and Social Structure in the Early Modern Northern Netherlands* (Erasmus University, Rotterdam, 1980) and a host of studies of elite formation in individual Dutch cities.

³⁰ J. Habermas, *The Structural Transformation of the Public Sphere: An Inquiry into a Category of Bourgeois Society* (MIT Press, Cambridge Mass, 1991), 175-177.

³¹ Ross, 'Rise of the Cape Gentry', 3.

³² L. Guelke & R. Shell, 'An Early Colonial Landed Gentry: Land and Wealth in the Cape Colony, 1682-1731', *Journal of Historical Geography* 9 (1983), 265-86.

³³ Ross, 'Rise of the Cape Gentry.'

been further teased out by scholars such as Wayne Dooling, Gerald Groenewald and Gavin Williams.³⁴ Dooling has contributed to the scholarship by establishing the importance of the consolidation of wealth over the course of several generations, while highlighting the central role that women played in the continuance and expansion of the burgher elite. Families could and did retain their hold on land, wealth, and social position, but not always via male inheritance or networks.³⁵ This is also of particular importance regarding the role women played in family networks, which forms an important basis of this study.

Gerald Groenewald's research on the accumulation of capital through various economic activities has shed light on the complexities of wealth-creation during the colonial period at the Cape. His article, 'An early modern entrepreneur: Hendrik Oostwald Eksteen and the creation of wealth in Dutch colonial Cape Town, 1702-1741' follows the career of Eksteen between 1702 and 1741. This research shows that wealth was not only created in the immediate rural hinterland of the Cape through farming activities but that urban elites were also created through the exploitation of various entrepreneurial opportunities in an urban environment, one being the alcohol *pacht*.

Karel Schoeman's recent book, *Swanesang: Die Einde van die Kompanjiestyd aan die Kaap*, covers the final years of the VOC control at the Cape and the beginning of the British occupation, and in particular devotes a chapter to the fate of the Van Reenen family.³⁶ Johan Fourie has published extensively on the economy of the colonial Cape. His work also supports the idea of an economic elite, although he pays little attention to the social aspects of the colony.³⁷ On the material culture front, Antonia Malan has contributed greatly with her work on the estate inventories. The purpose of the research she conducted, in particular for her doctoral thesis, 'Households of the Cape, 1750-1850: Inventories and their

³⁴ Guelke, & Shell, 'Early Colonial Landed Gentry', 265-286; Dooling, 'Making of a Colonial Elite'; Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule*; Groenewald, 'Early Modern Entrepreneur'; Groenewald, 'Dynasty Building, Family Networks and Social Capital', and Williams, 'Who, Where and When.'

³⁵ Dooling, 'Making of a Colonial Elite', 147-62. The central role of women has also been established in earlier studies such as that of Martin Hall, 'Secret Lives of Houses'.

³⁶ K. Schoeman, *Swanesang: Die Einde van die Kompanjiestyd aan die Kaap, 1771-1795* (Protea, Pretoria, 2016).

³⁷ J. Fourie, 'Subverting the Standard View of the Cape Economy: Robert Ross's Cliometric Contribution and the Work it Inspired', in I. Peša & J.-B. Gewald (eds.), *Magnifying Perspectives, Contributions to History: A Festschrift for Robert Ross* (African Studies Centre, Leiden, 2017).

Archaeological Record', was to study changes that occurred in the material culture of the Cape during the period when the British took over control of the colony. Her study is an excellent source for changes in material culture during this period of political flux. Within the same line of enquiry, her mentor, Martin Hall's work on the materiality of colonialism fills in the gaps of our understanding of the importance of possessions within the colonial context, while also focusing on the relevance of particular families, and the role of women in them, at the colonial Cape.³⁸

Hermann Giliomee's work is of particular significance because of the comparatively limited in-depth work done on the period between 1795 and 1820. His doctoral thesis on the First British Occupation provides a good overview of the period up to 1803, although in the tradition of his generation of historians, he tends to focus more on the economic and political changes that occurred. Consequently, he pays relatively little attention to the effects that the changes in regime had on the individual and society.³⁹ This research informed the collection, *The Shaping of South African Society*, which covers the period from the creation of the refreshment station at the Cape up until 1840.⁴⁰ Existing work on the social changes that occurred during this period are relatively limited. Robert Ross's *Status and Respectability: A Tragedy of Manners* investigates, in its opening chapter, the changes in society from the Dutch administration to British rule, and argues that respectability was central to the history of nineteenth-century colonial South Africa.⁴¹ By the 1830s, the 'landed gentry' were in the decline. Wayne Dooling has highlighted possible reasons for this decline in various publications, often drawing comparisons between the 'landed gentry' of the Cape and the elites of other areas, amongst which the eighteenth-century landed classes in England.⁴²

In order to establish the complexities of relationships and kinship during the period between 1795 and c.1820, this study utilises the concept of network theory as it pertains to family and social networks. A recent trend in both Cape and international historiography is the rise

³⁸ Hall, 'Secret Lives of Houses.'

³⁹ H. Giliomee, *Die Kaap tydens die Eerste Britse Bewind, 1795-1803* (Hollandsch Afrikaansche Uitgevers Maatschappij, Cape Town, 1975).

⁴⁰ Giliomee, *Kaap tydens die Eerste Britse Bewind*.

⁴¹ Ross, *Status and Respectability*.

⁴² W. Dooling, 'The Decline of the Cape Gentry', *Journal of African History* 40, 2 (1999), 215-42 and Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule*.

of the study of social networks, both in the local sphere and cross continental, which will be discussed in more detail below. Regarding South African historiography, studies into networks and the functioning of networks within their colonial contexts, have been done by scholars such as Kerry Ward in her book, *Networks of Empire*.⁴³ Here Ward traces the manifestation of networks in the imperial world of the VOC through a study of forced migration. Works such as these shed greater light on to the interconnected nature of the early colonial world, and are crucial for understanding the role of networks within society. By tracing the operation of family networks within broader colonial society, this study aims to add to this exiting body of work within the larger imperial context.

What is largely lacking in the historiography of the period between 1795 and c. 1820 is a study into the effects of the social and political changes of this period on the settled society living at the Cape. This period of political upheaval and constant changes of allegiances would have been exceedingly difficult to navigate in real life, and many burgher families had to find methods to straddle and adapt to the challenges that these political changes caused. It is the aim of this study to shed some light on this period of upheaval, and to highlight the effects it had on the burgher population by investigating how three family complexes managed to survive and, in some instances, thrive, under foreign rule.

The first part of the thesis addresses the development of the free-burgher population at the Cape of Good Hope in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and sheds some light on the establishment of the colonial elite and their function within colonial society. In particular, the first chapter traces how society at the Cape formed from a wide variety of cultural and linguistic ethnicities who migrated to southern Africa and eventually developed into a relatively homogeneous population. Within this population, an elite arose with intricate family connections to the VOC official elite, as well as with other prominent family complexes, as has been extensively studied by scholars of the period.⁴⁴ The study then covers the political changes that occurred between 1795 and c.1820, and the impact wider international politics had on the colonial outpost at the Cape. As international tensions grew following the French Revolution of 1789, conflict between the French Republic and Great

⁴³ K. Ward, *Networks of Empire: Forced Migration in the Dutch East India Company* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2009).

⁴⁴ See the work of Leonard Guelke, Robert Shell, Wayne Dooling, Gerald Groenewald and Gavin Williams, amongst other scholars of this period.

Britain had significant effects on greater European and international politics. The growth of revolutionary ideals in the Netherlands and the eventual overthrow of the Prince of Orange brought the Cape of Good Hope in the direct line of fire of the British Crown. The Cape as a settlement was badly administered and relatively poor, but in terms of strategic location *en route* to the east, the Cape was of immense importance, as scholars increasingly acknowledge.⁴⁵ Because Britain had significant interests in Asia, it became essential to protect their interests against possible French invasion – with the result that the Cape became a strategic possession. This significance can be seen in the resulting conflict and multiple changes in government over the two decades following the outbreak of the Napoleonic Wars.

Methodology and Sources

This thesis takes its approach and methodology from the ‘new cultural history.’ This approach has been very influential in the study of, particularly, the early modern period, since the late twentieth century. Cultural history aims to uncover past experiences; as such, it is interested in the lived reality of ordinary individuals.⁴⁶ In the late 1990s, a shift in the focus of the historiography of the Cape occurred with a new interest in cultural history stressing the individual through investigations of their identity, status and social position.⁴⁷

For the theoretical basis of the study, the theory of social stratification – that is the theory that a society will ‘categorise’ people into socioeconomic strata based on their occupation, income, wealth and social status, or derived power – is very useful to study historical patterns of elite formation.⁴⁸ This theory will therefore serve as a central point of departure

⁴⁵ John McAleer explores the maritime gateway to Asia around the Cape of Good Hope and its critical role in the establishment, consolidation and maintenance of the British Empire in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. J. McAleer, *Britain's Maritime Empire: Southern Africa, the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, 1763-1820* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2016).

⁴⁶ Cf. Oberholzer, ‘Free Burgher Women in the Eighteenth Century’, 2 and M. Rubin, ‘What is Cultural History Now?’, in D. Cannadine (ed.), *What is History Now?* (Palgrave Macmillan, Houndmills, 2003), 80-94.

⁴⁷ N. Worden, ‘After Race and Class: Recent Trends in the Historiography of Early Colonial Cape Society’, *South African Historical Journal* 62, 3 (2010), 589-602.

⁴⁸ According to D.B. Grusky, four of the core concepts of social stratification that should be taken into account in any study of this nature, include (1) the degree of inequality over the different social groups, (2) the rigidity of stratification over time, (3) to what extent does stratification rest on ascriptive processes such as the traits

in helping us understand the society living at the Cape at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. The two most prominent modern theories of social stratification are those of Kingsley Davis and Wilbert Moore, subsequently somewhat refined by Kingsley Davis.⁴⁹ Their theory has come to be known simply as the Davis and Moore theory of social stratification. The theory was 'logically' constructed to show why social stratification and inequality are positively functional, and therefore necessary in all but the simplest of human societies. Davis and Moore contend that there existed a 'universal necessity' for social inequality in any social order. Grusky underlines this, and states that social stratification has existed for the greater part of human history. He claims that it was only during the Enlightenment that a critical 'rhetoric of quality' started to emerge in opposition to this stratification.⁵⁰ Enlightenment ideas paved the way for the undermining of the power of traditional authorities such as the Church and the Monarchy, and influenced the political revolutions of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

A related theory comes from the more abstract and general functional perspective of the influential American sociologist, Talcott Parsons. This theory does not contradict that of Davis and Moore, but its focus is on social order more generally, and the function of social stratification for the overall maintenance of social order.⁵¹ Parsons' work is more abstract than that of Davis and Moore. Within the continuation of the so-called 'Warner School', Parsons argued that status and honour constitute the most important dimensions of social stratification. According to Parsons, individuals are ranked according to the extent that they live up to the values of society.⁵² These theories will be utilised within the context of the new cultural history approach in order to form the underlying framework of the study.

In order to make the changing relationships between the burgher population and the incoming political elite concrete, and the study manageable, the thesis focusses on three

presented at birth influence standing, (4) to what degree does status crystallisation occur, i.e. to what degree is status stagnant? D.B. Grusky, 'The Past, Present and Future of Social Inequality' in D.B. Grusky (ed.), *Social Stratification: Class, Race, and Gender in Sociological Perspective* (4th edition, Westview Press, Bouldor, 2014), 3-51.

⁴⁹ H.R. Kerbo, *Social Stratification and Inequality: Class Conflict in Historical, Comparative, and Global Perspective* (8th edition, McGraw-Hill, New York, 2012), 117.

⁵⁰ Grusky, 'Past, Present and Future of Social Inequality.'

⁵¹ Grusky, 'Past, Present and Future of Social Inequality.'

⁵² Kerbo, *Social Stratification and Inequality*, 121.

prominent family complexes in order to determine the effects of the changes in regime on local society. These three family complexes serve as case studies in order to establish the extent of social change over the course of the period. The study of the Van Reenen family complex in chapter 4 serves to highlight the effects of the changes in regime on individuals who became exceedingly wealthy due to mercantile activities during the VOC period.⁵³ The Van Reenen family in particular are interesting in that, while some members of the family were strongly opposed to collaboration with the British, other members were almost archetypal 'collaborators' with the imperial system. The second family complex is that of the Cloete family of Great Constantia fame, whose fortunes are discussed in chapter 5 below.⁵⁴ Significantly, Hendrik Cloete was the Captain of the Burgher Cavalry of Stellenbosch at the start of the British invasion and aided in the defence of the Cape. Yet, his sons and, especially, his grandsons became loyal supporters of the British Crown, eventually marrying English women, with some even settling in England.⁵⁵ The final case study, namely that of the Truter family complex discussed in chapter 6, serves to illustrate the governmental role that many of those belonging to the burgher elite ended up fulfilling after the First British Occupation. This family's collaboration centres mostly on the role of Sir John Truter, and provides further insight into the complexities of family relations at the time. This family played a significant role in the legal world in the course of the three decades following the First British Occupation.

In order to establish the place and role of these family complexes within their larger colonial context, the study makes use of prosopographical methods. Prosopography is the study of the collective biography of a group with a common denominator, such as geographical location, in order to uncover certain historical patterns. The term prosopography has been traced back the sixteenth century, but the most commonly cited definition is that of the early modernist historian, Laurence Stone. He defines prosopography as the 'investigation of the common background characteristics of a group of actors in history by means of a collective study of their lives'. His definition suggests that the main utility of such an approach of study

⁵³ J.D. Van Renen, *Van Reenen, Van Renen, Vanrenen Family, 1722-1994* (Port Elizabeth Genealogical Research Group, Port Elizabeth, 1994).

⁵⁴ G.J. Schutte (ed.), *Hendrik Cloete, Groot Constantia and the VOC, 1788-1799: Documents from the Swellengrebel Archive* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 2003).

⁵⁵ W.J. de Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Volume 1 (National Council for Social Research, Cape Town, 1968), 171.

lies in the light it sheds on the 'roots of political action' and its ability to engage in 'social structure and mobility'.⁵⁶ Stone suggests that prosopography could be used in one of two ways, firstly in the study of elites, which included the emergence of new power groups, and secondly as a means to study the masses, of whom little is known.

This study will also make use of genealogy as an aid in prosopographical research. The difference between a genealogical study and a prosopographical study of a family or lineage is that, in the case of a genealogy, the internal family relations are prevalent, whereas the research focus in a prosopographical study is on the relations of members of the family with the outer world. Of utmost importance for the study is the contacts (social and economic ties, marriages and networks) that the individuals with whom the study is concerned have *outside* of their family, and the way in which these affect the history and influence of the family. Lastly, there is a connection between prosopography and 'micro-history'. Both micro-history and prosopography study trends and relations that are not always clearly visible.⁵⁷ The ultimate objective of micro-history is to gain insight into the social structures and processes determining everyday social and cultural life. Micro-history focuses on small units of research such as a single event or group of individuals, and aspires to ask large research questions based on small units of study. The distinguishing aspect of micro-history is the small scale of the investigation that a historian focuses on. This micro-focus is aimed at achieving greater insight into the macro-history of a place, event or community. In this regard, the study aims to uncover larger structural shifts through the study of three family networks.

In conjunction with this, the study utilises case studies as a means of qualitative research. Case studies are one of the oldest methods of enquiry in the field of qualitative research.⁵⁸ A case study is an intensive analysis of a single unit⁵⁹ -- in the case of this thesis, of a single-

⁵⁶ L. Stone as quoted in S. Gunn and L. Faire, *Research Methods for History* (2nd edition, Edinburgh University Press, Edinburgh, 2012), 84.

⁵⁷ K. Verboven, M. Carlier & J. Dumolyn, 'A Short Manual to the Art of Prosopography', in K.S.B. Keats-Rohan (ed.), *Prosopography, Approaches and Applications: A Handbook* (Unit for Prosopographical Research, Oxford, 2007), 35-69.

⁵⁸ In the field of psychology, case studies have been in use since the 1920s. A. B Starman, 'The Case Study as a Type of Qualitative Research', *Journal of Contemporary Educational Studies* 1 (2013).

⁵⁹ B. Flyvbjerg, 'Case Study', in N. K. Denzi & Y. S Lincoln (eds.), *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*, (4th edition, Thousand Oaks, Sage, 2011), 301.

family complex – with the intention of shedding light on an underlying historical pattern or trend. After the selection of the individual unit of study (here the three family complexes), a number of techniques are employed to analyse the unit of study. These techniques can be qualitative or quantitative, and can even represent a mix of different techniques in order to understand better the subject of the study within the greater social context of the period. Although case studies are commonly used in a number of fields outside of the social sciences, the technique has received some critique from social scientists because of a perceived lack of generalisation that can be made from a single case.⁶⁰ For this reason, it is of utmost importance that any given case study should be situated carefully in its historical context in order to contribute to a greater understanding of the period. Social scientists such as B. Flyvbjerg have disputed this emphasis on generalisation as reason for critiquing case studies as a method of study, exactly because of the context-dependence of case studies as method of inquiry.⁶¹ In fact, the strength of the case study as a method of study relies very much on the focus of the particular (and not generalisation) to enable us to gain a deeper understanding of underlying social processes.

Qualitative research techniques, such as close reading techniques, are employed to analyse information gathered from archival and other primary sources. The strength of qualitative research is its ability to provide descriptions of how people experienced an issue or event. It provides information about the 'human' side. Qualitative methods are also effective in identifying intangible factors, such as social norms, socioeconomic status, gender roles *et cetera*.⁶² For this study, a sizeable body of primary sources exists for which these techniques can be employed. The study makes use of a variety of archival and published primary documents. In order to understand the period leading up to 1795, the Resolutions and Proclamations (*plakaten*) of the Council of Policy provide insight into the political changes occurring shortly before the First British Occupation.⁶³ In 1803, Jacob Abraham de Mist was

⁶⁰ R. Miles, 'Complexity, Representation and Practice: Case Study as Method and Methodology', *Issues in Educational Research* 25, 3 (2015), 309.

⁶¹ Miles, 'Complexity, Representation and Practice', 310.

⁶² C. Dawson, *Introduction to Research Methods, A Practical Guide for Anyone Undertaking a Research Project* (Little Brown Books, London, 2009), 116.

⁶³ S.D. Naude (ed.), *Kaapse Plakkaatboek, Deel V (1795-1803)* (Cape Times, Cape Town, 1950). The Resolutions of the Council of Policy have been fully transcribed and are available online at <http://databases.tanap.net/cgh/>

appointed the Commissioner-General of the Cape Colony. His report on the Cape during his tenure resulted in *The memorandum of Commissary J.A. de Mist containing recommendations for the form and administration of government at the Cape of Good Hope*, which contains valuable insights into the short-lived Batavian period at the Cape.⁶⁴ The report ranges widely over the social, economic and political conditions of the Cape in the early years of the nineteenth century. In addition to the numerous published primary sources (such as Theal's *Records of the Cape Colony*), the study also relies on archival material as a central part for its historical enquiry. The Cape Archives is the main source of primary documentation for this period, in the form of wills, testaments and other business records.

First-hand accounts (or 'ego documents') also illuminate the individual experience, providing a close-up view of the events during this tumultuous period, instead of simply giving an economic and political overview. The letters, journals and diaries of Lady Anne Barnard are particularly useful in this regard. Her diaries contain anecdotal evidence from the view of a prominent person in the newly established British elite at the Cape. She refers often to a number of prominent burghers, amongst whom the Van Reenens and the Cloetes, which will enrich the study of family complexes central to the Cape elite. *Gleanings in Africa*, written by an anonymous writer, provides a first-hand account of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope during the First British Occupation, from the perspective of a British soldier.⁶⁵ This complements Lady Anne's observations, and serves to give another dimension, from the perspective of a less important member of the new British society at the Cape. Representing the opinions and feelings of the local population, there are a number of sources available for study. In order to glean information from these primary sources, I make use of close reading techniques in order to discern any patterns within the first-hand accounts and to single out any relevant anecdotal evidence. In addition, interpretive techniques are employed in order to analyse the qualitative material and to excavate the underlying meanings and beliefs embedded within the text. For the study of the complex family networks of the Van Reenens, the Cloetes and the Truters, it is essential to employ basic genealogical research methods in order to establish the family complexes that will form an integral part of the thesis, aided by the existence of the published

⁶⁴ J.A. de Mist, *Memorandum Containing Recommendations for the Form and Administration of Government at the Cape of Good Hope, 1802* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1920).

⁶⁵ Anon., *Gleanings in Africa: Exhibiting a Faithful and Correct View of the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope and the Surrounding Country* (James Cundee, London, 1806).

genealogies of the Genealogical Institute of South Africa.⁶⁶ Secondary materials including books, journal articles and both published and unpublished theses will aid to the study in contextualising these families.

These data from various primary and secondary source materials are reviewed in order to establish their usefulness, before being sorted according to the different topical themes relating to the thesis. As a second step, patterns are identified and analysed in order to gain a better understanding of the period. The analysis, explanation and interpretation of the data are performed by using a combination of narration, exposition and description in order to link the data and form a greater understanding of the insights contained within them.



⁶⁶ M. Rubincam & K. Stryker Rodda, *Genealogical Research: Methods and Sources* (American Society of Genealogists, Washington, DC, 1960). Genealogical data utilised in this thesis derive from J.A. Heese & R.T.J. Lombard (eds.), *Suid-Afrikaanse Geslagregisters / South African Genealogies* (15 volumes, Genealogical Institute of South Africa, Pretoria & Stellenbosch, 1986-2007).

CHAPTER 2

The Development of a Free-Burgher Elite during the VOC Era

European expansion and global interaction in the early modern period resulted in a new world in which hitherto isolated parts of the planet came into contact for the first time.¹ As part of this ever-expanding colonising process, the Cape of Good Hope became settled by the Dutch East India Company from the mid-seventeenth century. The Cape settlement was established as a refreshment station where VOC ships travelling between Europe and Asia could be repaired, food and water supplies could be restocked, and crews could recover. The Cape did not produce any profitable spices or other goods for importation like the Asian settlements did, and therefore the Company's initial plan was not to establish a permanent settlement or colony in the area. The original VOC plan for the settlement in Table Bay included nothing more than the building of a fort and a garden.

Soon after its establishment, it became clear to the VOC officials that the Company employees could not cultivate enough fresh produce and provide meat to satisfy the demand of the passing ships *en route* to Batavia, and that passing crews might need more than just basic sustenance. Because of this need and the desire to expand the nascent settlement, Commander Jan van Riebeeck made the first exception to this initial plan, granting the right to keep a tavern next to the fort to Annetje Boom, the wife of the Company gardener.² This tavern provided the men of passing ships with refreshments and lodging, although no doubt those who belonged to the garrison at the fort also frequented Annetje Boom's tavern.

In 1657, the VOC directors decided to release nine Company servants from their duties and to allow them to settle as free residents. Although the VOC provided these new 'free burghers' with land and slaves, this new policy was not very successful as European-style farming techniques failed in the Cape.³ Additionally, from early on, the burghers did not limit

¹ Cf. L. Oberholzer, 'Free Burgher Women in the Eighteenth Century and the Quest for Status', *Historia* 62, 1 (2017), 2.

² H.B. Thom (ed.), *Journal of Jan van Riebeeck* (3 volumes, Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1952-58), volume 1, 35; Cape Archives Repository (hereafter CA), Council of Policy (hereafter C), 171, Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 73 (per Tanap).

³ L. Guelke, 'The Anatomy of a Colonial Settler Population: Cape Colony 1657-1750', *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 21, 3 (1988), 5.

themselves to the agricultural sector. A number of them settled in Cape Town and made a living by a variety of trades. Many burghers became bakers, bricklayers, blacksmiths, shoemakers, painters and carpenters; a large number provided lodging for and catering to seamen, as was the case with Annetje Boom earlier.⁴ By 1682, the settlement was still relatively small and confined to the Cape peninsula with only a very small settlement at Stellenbosch.⁵

Once the burgher class was established by the end of the 1650s, it expanded fairly rapidly. In the Cape district alone, the number of burghers grew from nine in 1657 to 51 in 1658, and then to 563 in 1701.⁶ The free burgher population settled into one of two roles, firstly urban free burghers who made a livelihood from calling ships by running taverns or rendering services. In 1657, the year that the VOC established the free burgher population, there were four taverns alongside the Fort and other burghers were working as tailors, bakers or carpenters.⁷ The second group of free burghers consisted of farmers who supplied the VOC with produce for passing ships. The annual *opgaaf* (taxation) rolls do not make any distinction between those free burghers who lived in urban areas or those who settled in the immediate rural areas. Despite this, many of the wealthier settlers were initially farmers who made their money in agriculture before investing in urban properties. This movement between the urban and rural spaces of many of the wealthier settlers is suggested by a complaint made by burgher councillors in Cape Town in 1708 that a number of farmers from Stellenbosch and Drakenstein evaded urban militia duty even though they have houses in town and conduct many of their business affairs in town.⁸

Because of existing records, it is relatively easy to establish the number of slaves and VOC officials living in urban areas at the Cape, but it is much more difficult to determine the number of burghers who lived in Cape Town. *Opgaaf* rolls do not distinguish between the

⁴ R. Ross, 'The Cape of Good Hope and the World Economy, 1652-1835', in H. Giliomee and R. Elphick (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840* (Maskew Millar Longman, Cape Town, 1989), 244.

⁵ Guelke, 'Anatomy of a Colonial Settler Population', 460.

⁶ C. Beyers, *Die Kaapse Patriotte gedurende die Laaste Kwart van die Agtiende Eeu, en die Voortlewing van hul Denkbeelde* (Juta, Pretoria, 1967), 339.

⁷ Thom (ed.), *Journal of Jan van Riebeeck*, volume 2, 155, 180, 197-98 and volume 3, 158.

⁸ M.K. Jeffreys & S.D. Naude (eds.), *Kaapse Plakkaatboek, Deel II (1707-1753)* (Cape Times, Cape Town, 1948), 7-8.

urban and rural burghers.⁹ Therefore, it is quite difficult to determine the number of urban and rural burghers living at the Cape. Additionally, this group of free burghers constantly increased by means of immigration, making the number of free burghers in different areas of the Cape constantly fluctuating. What scholars have been able to establish is a consistent and considerable growth in population size over the course of the eighteenth century. The white population as included in the *opgaaf* rolls numbered around 1250 in 1701. By 1725 the population had doubled, doubling again by 1755 and doubling a third time by 1785. The total gross growth rate of the population by the end of the eighteenth century is estimated at 2.6% per annum.¹⁰

The Process of Immigration to the Cape

The initial plan of the Dutch East India Company was not to establish a permanent settlement at the Cape. This notion changed however after the first free burghers were released from their company contracts.

The first immigration guidelines for the Cape appeared in 1657, shortly before the first individuals were permitted to become free burghers.¹¹ The guidelines for immigration stipulated that no Europeans except Dutch and Germans were allowed to settle or even remain in the garrison. This would seemingly greatly have curtailed European immigration to the Cape but, as we will see later, this process was not as clear-cut. Despite this, the guidelines to allow immigration to the Cape was tightened further by Governor Bax in the 1670s. He determined that:

No one shall henceforth be discharged from the ships and the garrison, with a view to residing here as a burgher, except subjects of the State (who are not Roman Catholics, nor of bad character, but as far as is known honest, or who are indebted

⁹ Van Duin, P. & R. Ross, *The Economy of the Cape Colony in the Eighteenth Century* (Centre for the History of European Expansion, Leiden, 1987), 9.

¹⁰ R. Ross, *Beyond the Pale: Essays on the History of Colonial South Africa* (Wesleyan University Press, Hanover and London, 1993), 126.

¹¹ R.C.-H. Shell, 'Immigration: The Forgotten Factor in Cape Colonial Frontier Expansion, 1658-1817', *Safundi: Journal of South African and American Comparative Studies*, 6:2 (2007), 9.

to the Company in more than 4 months wages) or subjects of German states whose princes or sovereigns do not fit out any shipping.¹²

Dutch immigrants did not receive assistance to come to the Cape unlike the group of French Refugees from 1688. This is why very few Dutch families came in any significant numbers to the Cape, but rather came as individuals in service of the Company. Nonetheless, the Company brought a few orphan girls from the Netherlands in 1688 in an attempt to address the sex-imbalance at the settlement, but this was not successful.¹³

Guelke states that the 1717 decision of the VOC directors, the so-called *Heeren XVII* (Gentlemen 17), was a departure point regarding the immigration policy to the Cape. In 1716, they asked the Council of Policy at the Cape about the advisability of importing more slaves, or employing European labour instead. The immigration policy concerning European families would arise again in 1750 and 1751. This time the Company consulted all the magistrates in the various districts regarding the possible prospects for settlement. *Heemraden* (local councillors) from Stellenbosch and Drakenstein were all agreed that 'it was not possible for any additional families to earn a living here.'¹⁴ Despite the supposed opposition to immigration, Shell argues that there was no clear break in immigration.¹⁵ Even so, the Company preferred immigrants from northern Europe who were of a Protestant religion. These immigrants were also mainly male. Because of this Dutch, German, Scandinavian, and Swiss bachelor settlers dominated European immigration patterns in the eighteenth-century Cape.

The Company drew its employees from all over central and northern Europe, including Germany and the Scandinavian countries, dispelling the general misconception that the Dutch were the only ones to settle at the Cape. In fact, Shell argues that as many as 4 000

¹² D. Moodie and A. H. Smith (eds.), *The Record, or a Series of Official Papers Relative to the Condition and Treatment of the Native Tribes of South Africa* (Balkema, Cape Town, 1960), 98.

¹³ J.A. Heese, 'Die Hollandse Weesmeisies', *Familia* 3 (1976). Wilhelmina and her seven orphan companions were sent to the Cape following requests made by Jan van Riebeeck in 1659 and Simon van der Stel in 1685 that the *Heeren XVII* should send between 20 and 40 marriageable girls to the Cape, and that these girls should be able to assist in the farming activities of their prospective husbands.

¹⁴ Shell, 'Immigration', 10.

¹⁵ Shell, 'Immigration', 10.

German settlers arrived at the Cape during the eighteenth century, a significant number that accounts for the fact that the European population was in no way homogenous.¹⁶

The conditions that existed in many parts of the Dutch and German lands in the seventeenth century were marked by penury and unemployment amongst the lower classes. This situation worsened by the growth of prosperity of Dutch cities due to the Dutch East India Company's extensive international trade. Dutch cities drew the poor from the rural areas, both in the Netherlands and from neighbouring states.¹⁷ To escape poverty, many men decided to immigrate to other localities by joining the Dutch East India Company. This process was followed by many people of different nationalities. O.F. Mentzel, himself a German immigrant to the Cape (albeit only temporarily), wrote of this:

It is almost incredible how men try to force their way into the service of the Company. I myself have seen men scramble up to the window of the second story [of the East India House] above the entrance door and wait there, hanging on to the iron grating until the door was opened; they then immediately let go, fell on the heads of the men standing around the door and this way got carried into the house. Even the rejected men do not give up hope; they put on a different uniform and wait about an hour, or an hour and a half. Then they force their way in a second time and often have the good fortune to be accepted...¹⁸

The population was bolstered further by the arrival of yet another European group, the Huguenots, who came to the Cape after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes. The first group of these Protestant immigrants arrived at the Cape in 1688 and brought with them knowledge of viticulture which would change the nature of the production of wine at the Cape. The Edict of Nantes was revoked by Louis XIV of France on 18 October 1685. From 1688, small groups of Huguenots started arriving at the Cape of Good Hope although there are accounts of Huguenots arriving as early as 1671. By 1692, approximately 200 Huguenots had settled at the Cape.¹⁹ Simon van der Stel had set aside land for Huguenot settlement along the Berg River, with the intention of integrating the Huguenots with the

¹⁶ Shell, 'Immigration', 10.

¹⁷ Shell, 'Immigration', 10.

¹⁸ O.F. Mentzel, *Life at the Cape in Mid-Eighteenth Century, Being the Biography of Rudolf Siegfried Alleman* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1919), 209.

¹⁹ H. Giliomee & B. Mbenga, *Nuwe Geskiedenis van Suid-Afrika* (Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2007), 60.

Dutch population already settled at the Cape. The Company's reasons for aiding the French refugees was due to their shared religious beliefs and the Huguenots' particular skills. Many of those that immigrated to southern Africa were highly skilled artisans or farmers with particular knowledge of viticulture. This group of immigrants also aided in establishing a permanent white burgher settlement at the Cape as the Huguenots had no fatherland to return to due to the persecution of their religious beliefs in France. This 'French experiment' was however widely seen as a failure in trying to establish a large white settler population at the Cape. In January 1699, the Cape authorities wrote to the Middelburg Chamber of the VOC:

With reference to the French Refugees who came over here with the intention of earning their living by farming, we assisted them as far as possible to settle down, in accordance with the instructions of the Hon. Company. But there are already many of that kind settled here, some of them ill-behaved, while, more important, they have a limited knowledge of farming, and ... about it, thus causing much poverty among themselves, so that, in the end, they are likely to become burdensome to the Company and the poor fund, especially as at present there are many old people among them who have not many more years to live, and are not able to earn much, if anything at all. So that we would rather, if it please your Excellencies, not to be burdened with such refugees for the future; but would prefer to have sent out to us farmers from Zeeland, of an industrious type, who have a thorough knowledge of farming, and who happen to be inclined to make the voyage here in order to improve our farming methods. These would be far more suitable for this country, and would be of much more service and value to the Colony.²⁰

The Huguenots were forced to assimilate. According to C.W. de Kiewiet: 'In two generations or less, the two groups (Dutch and French) had grown together and become one.'²¹ Splinter groups of other nationalities who also made their way to the Cape via the VOC networks were incorporated into this homogenous culture. At the Cape, Dutch and German settlers remained the main population groups while immigrants from other parts of Europe were integrated and assimilated into these groups. Although it is difficult to estimate the total population living at the Cape, scholars such as Robert Ross and Pieter van Duin have

²⁰ C.G. Botha, *The French Refugees at the Cape* (Cape Times, Cape Town, 1921), 160.

²¹ C.W. de Kiewiet, *A History of South Africa: Social and Economic* (Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1941), 6.

attempted to determine the size of the local population with a view towards establishing the size of the local market that supported the Cape economy. Through use of the *opgaaf* rolls, they have calculated that the population of Cape Town increased from just over 1 000 people during the first decade of the eighteenth century to around 11 000 during the years between 1789 and 1793.²² As with the existing settler population, this group of new immigrant settlers entered positions in diverse disciplines, settling into the position of traders, innkeepers, and artisans in urban areas as well as taking up farming activities in the rural districts.²³ The settler population was unevenly distributed across the three regional areas of the colony: Cape Town, its immediate rural hinterland and the frontier areas. In each of these areas, there were great differences in wealth and the social status of individual settlers, but the very richest settlers were exclusively to be found in Cape Town and its rural areas.²⁴

Development of a Landed Elite

The pioneering Italian political scientist, Gaetano Mosca, claims that a ruling class attempts to reproduce itself by dominating political forces that tend to become hereditary. Descendants of a ruling class have good chances to have the traits deemed necessary to belong to the ruling class.²⁵ We see this particular facet of elite formation clearly from the development of the elite residing at the Cape of Good Hope. Elite positioning was closely linked to family and birth, with one generation making way for the next until Pareto's law of the circulation of elites takes effect. Free burghers with particular interests in agricultural production made way for their descendants to fill the role of elite members of the burgher society. The population expansion at the Cape between 1700 and the 1830s developed alongside an increase in agricultural production. This group of elite burghers, with particular interest in agricultural production, benefitted greatly from the growth in population.

Production rose regularly throughout the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Especially wine and grain production increased exponentially. Wine production grew from 1 133 *leggers* (about 660 000 litre) in 1725, to 5 528 (nearly 3 million litre) in 1775, and 9 643

²² Van Duin & Ross, *Economy of the Cape Colony*, 114-15.

²³ Guelke, 'Anatomy of a Colonial Settler Population', 460.

²⁴ Guelke, 'Anatomy of a Colonial Settler Population', 469.

²⁵ G. Mosca, *The Ruling Class* (McGraw-Hill, New York, 1939), 60-61.

leggers (over 5.5 million) in 1806.²⁶ Wheat production increased from about 15 000 hectolitres in the 1720s to more than 150 000 by 1806.²⁷ Stock farming also grew during this period. In the 1770s, there were more than a million sheep and around 50 000 cattle, and the numbers continued to grow thereafter, to more than 1.75 million sheep and 300 000 cattle by the 1820s.²⁸ This steady agricultural expansion resulted in a small group of burghers becoming exceptionally wealthy. This is the group of rich free burgers, mostly living in the immediate hinterland of Cape Town, that Robert Ross describes as belonging to, what he termed, the 'landed gentry'.²⁹ Ross argues this based on the increase in viticulture and grain production between the years 1720 and 1750, with concomitant territorial expansion of agriculture and economic growth. These enterprising farmers managed to bring more land under production and consequently became prosperous by the 1780s. Visitors to the Cape increasingly remarked upon the wealth and luxurious living of this group by the late eighteenth century.³⁰ In 1783, Commissioner Hendrik Breton commented on these people:

on various farms, that I expressly visited, I found a far from simple life, and nothing except signs of prosperity, to the extent that, in addition to splendour and magnificence in clothes and carriages, the houses are filled with elegant furniture and tables decked with silverware and served by tidily clothed slaves.³¹

As discussed above, Mentzel described the settler society at the Cape by dividing them into four distinct classes.³² The first of these corresponds to those people that Groenewald has

²⁶ Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 15.

²⁷ Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 15.

²⁸ Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 20.

²⁹ R. Ross, 'The Rise of the Cape Gentry', *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 9, 2 (1983).

³⁰ Cf. L. Oberholzer, 'Free Burgher Women in the Eighteenth Century and the Quest for Status', *Historia* 62, 1 (2017), 4.

³¹ Quoted in S.D. Naude, 'Willem Cornelis Boers', *Archives Yearbook for South African History* (1950), 413.

³² O.F. Mentzel, *A Geographical and Topographical Description of the Cape of Good Hope, Volume 3* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1944), 98-99.

called a 'bourgeoisie', some of whom were extremely rich and presented themselves as a 'class apart'.³³

The anonymous author of *Gleanings in Africa* also wrote of these people in 1806:

In the vicinity of the Cape the manners of the planters exhibit a different complexion from those in the more distant parts ... surrounded by their slaves, they sway with sovereign authority. They assume an air of consequence in their intercourse with the more distant settlers, and affect an ostentatious parade ...³⁴

Mentzel describes the second class of burghers as those 'who live like gentry'. He writes:

in the second group...I count those who possess excellent farms, paid for and lucrative who live on these farms and produce more than they consume... of those who actually belong to the second class, it may truly be said that they live like gentry and some of them even better; especially if they do not live too far from the City, that is not further than 20 or 30 hours; they may then turn everything conveniently into money and obtain everything they want for their money. Such well-to-do farmers keep *knechts* (servants) for their own convenience, and schoolmasters for their small children ...³⁵

The third class of burghers, according to Mentzel, are the industrious class of farmers. Mentzel writes of them: 'They are both master and *knecht*. They are always busy... They have plenty to eat, and seldom lack wine though they may run short before the vintage ...'³⁶ Mentzel passes briefly over the fourth class, who should be called herdsman rather than farmers.³⁷ These groups of farmers, both those belonging to the third and the fourth classes, were not considered part of the landed elite, although they might have made a fairly decent

³³ G. Groenewald, 'A Cape Bourgeoisie?: Alcohol, Entrepreneurs and the Evolution of an Urban Free-Burgher Society in VOC Cape Town', in N. Worden (ed.), *Contingent Lives: Social Identity and Material Culture in the VOC World* (University of Cape Town, Cape Town, 2007).

³⁴ Anon. *Gleanings in Africa: Exhibiting a Faithful and Correct View of the Manners and Customs of the Inhabitants of the Cape of Good Hope and the Surrounding Country* (James Cundee, London, 1806), 210.

³⁵ Mentzel, *Geographical and Topographical Description*, 98-99.

³⁶ Mentzel, *Geographical and Topographical Description*, 106.

³⁷ Mentzel, *Geographical and Topographical Description*, 110.

living. The landed elite were in effect those industrious farmers who managed to increase their yield significantly by bringing more and more land under production.

Development of the Urban Gentry

The VOC initially did not intend to establish a permanent urban settlement at the Cape. Nonetheless, a map of 1660 already shows the existence of several small streets. The town continued to develop after the *Heeren XVII* decided to retain the colony and, by 1759, Jacob Francken commented that 'during the last 25 years [Cape Town] has increased by the addition of various streets, so that now it is rather a city than a village'.³⁸ Despite this appraisal, Cape Town remained quite rural in its appearance, with farms, cultivated lands and large vegetable gardens barely separated from buildings and denser settlement. There were no city walls, and the distinction between the rural and semi-rural areas was insignificant.³⁹

Around the same time that the first agricultural free burghers were established, men and women began to settle at the Cape to fill various other occupations. Mostly they became keepers of drinking and lodging houses, but others became shopkeepers, bakers, brewers and a range of other artisans.⁴⁰ This contributed to establishing and expanding the town. As the settlement grew, and through the ingenuity of various individuals, some free burghers attained economic success in the urban environment. The development of an urban elite was greatly assisted by exploiting mercantile activities such as the lucrative alcohol *pachten* (leases or monopolies). The retail of alcohol and meat was regulated by the VOC, which issued these *pachten* yearly (for alcohol, but five-yearly for meat). These *pachten* were bought by the highest bidder, who then acquired the right to retail various types of alcohol in the urban areas or to provide meat to the VOC at set prices.⁴¹ During the early years of the settlement, the Cape administration gave several burghers the right to sell liquor, which they had to purchase from the Company. Because of widespread smuggling, the Company realised that they needed to implement stricter controls and for this reason the authorities

³⁸ R. Raven-Hart, 'The Cape in 1759: From the "Disastrous Journey" of Jacob Francken', *Quarterly Bulletin of the South African Library* 22, 1 (1967), 24.

³⁹ Worden, N., 'Space and Identity in VOC Cape Town', *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* 25 (1998/1999), 73.

⁴⁰ Ross, 'Cape of Good Hope and the World Economy', 224.

⁴¹ G. Groenewald, 'Dynasty Building, Family Networks and Social Capital: Alcohol *Pachters* and the Development of a Colonial Elite at the Cape of Good Hope, c. 1760-1790', *New Contree* 62 (2011), 24.

introduced the alcohol *pachten*, which at the same time would serve as a significant source of revenue. From the 1670s, the right to sell certain types of alcohol was sold by auction and in order to purchase a liquor *pacht*, the purchaser had to have access to significant financial capital. In addition, as with the meat *pacht*, the alcohol *pachter* had to present two other burghers who would stand surety for the payment of the *pacht* purchase, for in case the original purchaser could not pay. This meant that *pachters* had to be relatively wealthy or had to have very reliable financial backing. Because of this need for backing, *pachters* developed a close network of family and friends that they trusted.⁴² The alcohol trade was very successful and profitable, and served to create a relatively stable class of wealthy burghers who were urban-based but often with extensive interest in agriculture as well.⁴³ Between 1680 and 1795, the VOC sold alcohol *pachten* to 198 individuals, a substantial number of people who formed a large part of the urban elite.⁴⁴ The Cloete family was one of the burgher elite families who had a vested interest in the wine trade and in this regard, as we shall see, Hendrik Cloete was particularly active during the years before the First British Occupation. It was therefore the ability to adapt to new and changing circumstances that made it possible for certain burgher families to survive the tumultuous years between 1795 and 1820 that will be discussed in the next chapter.

The group of burghers who are sometimes referred to as the Cape bourgeoisie had their economic roots in town, where they displayed their social position through town houses and country estates. The richest wine farmers had various avenues for accumulating wealth, which included marriage, trade, Company contracts and their entrepreneurial abilities. Their

⁴² Groenewald, 'A Cape Bourgeoisie?', 279.

⁴³ An interesting example is that of Hendrik Oostwald Eksteen. After his arrival at the Cape, Eksteen married and soon invested in the alcohol *pacht*. In the same year, his father-in-law purchased a part of the *pacht* as well, and Eksteen borrowed money to pay his instalment on the alcohol *pacht*. This is a good example of the way in which members of the burgher population assisted one another in order to achieve economic success. By 1710, Eksteen was experienced enough to attempt with his father-in-law and two other burghers to monopolise the wine *pacht*. It is incredible that Eksteen managed, within less than a decade, to gain so much social and financial influence. This is likely the result of the social capital he gained by marrying into an already established family network. G. Groenewald, 'An Early Modern Entrepreneur: Hendrik Oostwald Eksteen and the Creation of Wealth in Dutch Colonial Cape Town, 1702-1741', *Kronos: Southern African Histories* 35 (2009).

⁴⁴ G. Groenewald, 'Een Dienstig Inwoonder: Entrepreneurs, Social Capital and Identity in Cape Town, c. 1720-1750', *South African Historical Journal* 59, 1 (2007), 126.

business activities were managed from their houses in town. Their advantage over rural residents did not lie in production of wine or raising of cattle, but in supplying wine or meat to the Company and for the Cape retail market. Because of this, their wealth did not depend on their ability to farm but rather the use they made of their wealth, as generated through their entrepreneurial enterprises to fund their farming.⁴⁵

A second, though slightly less lucrative trade was the meat *pachten* for the supply of meat to the VOC, yet by the eighteenth century it was obvious that the alcohol *pacht* was easier and more lucrative since it did not require as much start-up capital as the meat *pacht* did.⁴⁶ Furthermore, the urban elite did not only consist of members of the free-burgher population who managed to accumulate the necessary money to purchase either an alcohol *pacht* or a meat *pacht*. In fact, this group consisted of people of various professions and skills, while others individuals combined the identity of landed gentry with that of the urban elite by partaking in the accumulation of land as well as investment in the *pachten*. Johannes Gysbertus van Reenen was one such person who managed to do this. Initially the VOC had their own cattle farms from which they could supply the passing ships with fresh meat. Soon it became apparent that this was too costly an affair and the VOC instead decided to institute a meat *pacht* for the delivery of meat. This in essence meant that the Company would employ contractors to arrange for the supply of fresh meat at a set price. Additionally, the company would receive the initial fee for the purchase of the contract, which was granted for a period of five years, in essence monopolising the delivery of meat to the VOC. The meat *pacht* was sold in four parts and was often bought by a group of burghers in partnership. Each of these burghers, as in the case with the alcohol *pacht*, also needed to have wealthy burghers to stand surety for them.⁴⁷

The Van Reenens were an example of a family partaking in the meat trade and, to a significant extent, controlled the supply of meat to the Company in the second half of the eighteenth century. In addition to the meat trade, the alcohol trade was also very lucrative. One distinction, however, between alcohol *pachters* and the gentry was the nature of risk attached to their business. For *pachters*, a major concern was the risk of creditors calling

⁴⁵ G. Williams, 'Who, Where and When Were the Cape Gentry?', *Economic History of Developing Regions* 28, 2 (2013), 97-98.

⁴⁶ Groenewald, 'Een Dienstig Inwoonder', 130.

⁴⁷ G. Wagenaar, 'Johannes Gysbertus van Reenen: Sy Aandeel in die Kaapse Geskiedenis tot 1806', (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Pretoria, 1976), 37-41.

in loans – especially at inopportune times. Yet the risk was also rewarding, as in the case of Martin Melck, who at one stage was the wealthiest man at the Cape. His great fortune was made primarily in the alcohol trade. However, to divide these individuals into simple categories does not sufficiently reflect the complexities of networks, identities and belongings to which people belonged at the time. The relationship between urban and rural elites were much more complex, and the groups were often interrelated – through either commerce, friendship or marriage. Dooling qualifies the use of the term gentry by stating that, while the term typically denotes a society fractured along class divisions, in the Cape, ties of patronage, kinship and marriage reduced these cleavages. A most important aspect of community life was the circulation of land and wealth. In this regard, Cape landlords constructed a durable political economy in which the rules governing the circulation of land and wealth were defined in community and family terms.⁴⁸

The most prominent free burghers rose to the top of the social order through several different avenues. Some of the most prominent entrepreneurs, such as Hendrik Husing, Hendrik Oostwald Eksteen and Martin Melck, arrived at the Cape as soldiers in service of the VOC. One route of social mobility was through marriage to wealthy widows. This established an individual well enough to make use of social capital in order to fund further economic activities. Some of these entrepreneurs were able to establish monopolies, such as the monopolies on alcohol and meat supply to the Company.⁴⁹

Social Networks

A recent trend in both Cape and international historiography is the rise of the study of social networks, both in the local sphere and cross continental. As mentioned in the previous chapter, Mark Granovetter has extensively investigated the economic impacts of social networks, arguing that more often than not, informal connections, or those we spend a little time with, present economic opportunities.⁵⁰ Granovetter also argues that human interactions are embedded in decision-making and, in this instance, we may see some

⁴⁸ W. Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule in South Africa* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2007).

⁴⁹ Williams, 'Who, What, Where and When', 98.

⁵⁰ M. Granovetter, 'The Impact of Social Structure on Economic Outcomes', *Journal of Economic Perspectives* 19, 1 (2005), 34.

results in the situation at the Cape from 1795 onward. At the Cape, marriage and economic partnerships were key to explaining the position of a family within a greater network. Laura Mitchell has demonstrated how settlers and slaves moved through the region along a network of farms linked by family ties and reciprocal obligations, and that they made use of marriage to form 'intricate property networks'.⁵¹ The same connections, it can be argued, influenced ideas and thoughts of the members of these extended networks. This notion is supported by Dooling, who argues that family and residential propinquity built an intricate web of community relations.⁵²

All wealthy farm owners did not necessarily acquire their wealth from farming activities. Rather, there were a multitude of ways of achieving economic prosperity. The richest farmers at the Cape accumulated wealth from their marriages to widows who inherited property as well as from trade, Company contracts, the *pacht* system and entrepreneurial enterprises.⁵³ Some of the individuals who have been classified as belonging to the landed gentry, such as Hendrik Oostwald Eksteen, originally made their fortune through commercial activities such as the alcohol *pachten* and only subsequently invested in land and slaves.⁵⁴ Therefore there is no way to distinguish between who can be categorised as 'gentry' and 'urban elite' as these categories were not mutually exclusive in lived reality. In this regard, a contemporary noted:

In this Colony, intermarriages are so frequent that the whole of the Inhabitants are related. I recollect when General Jansens first took upon him the Government of the Cape of Good Hope he was consulting with a very worthy Friend of mine, a Mister Rheinens, concerning the necessity of modeling the constitution and if possible indicating the vices and corruptions of the generality of the People. An Herculean labour it would have proved. 'How, 'cries His Excellency is this to be done?' My friend whose penetration was equal to the goodness of his heart said: 'General this may be done by banishing root and branch four of the principal Families of the Cape: The Van Reinens, the Cloetez, The Bredaus and The Exteens.' Now these Families

⁵¹ L. Mitchell, *Belongings: Property, Family, and Identity in Colonial South Africa, An Exploration of Frontiers, 1725-c. 1830* (Columbia University Press, New York, 2009), 43.

⁵² Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule*, 40.

⁵³ Williams, 'Who, What, Where and When', 97.

⁵⁴ Groenewald, 'Early Modern Entrepreneur', 9.

were so interwoven with each other and with nearly the whole of the colony that there must have been a general clearance. This the Governor was convinced of and gave up the Attempt.⁵⁵

Intermarriage between different elite families had become so intricate by the time of the First British Occupation, that it would have been quite hard to differentiate between the different elite families. In addition, this intermarriage had created a stable web of family ties that would have been difficult to win over to British rule in the event that the existing elite were in conflict with the new government. In this regard, it seems likely that the new English establishment had just as much, if not more, to gain from winning the friendship and allegiance of the existing burgher elite.

The wine farms at Constantia are an interesting example of intermarriage between the richest members of the Cape Town bourgeoisie. One of the families that intermarried with the other landed elite were the Cloetes, who had close family ties with the prominent Eksteen, the Van Reenen, and the Van der Bijl families. This group invested heavily in their landed property, building impressive mansions to distinguish them from burghers of lesser standing. At the beginning of the nineteenth century, Barrow reports

a class of people who, to the blessings of plenty, add a sort of comfort which is unknown to the rest of the peasantry. They have not only the best houses and the most valuable estates, but in general, their domestic economy is managed in a more comfortable manner than is usually found among the country farmers.⁵⁶

Williams argues that these people were evidently part of the class that Groenewald has called the 'bourgeoisie', with access to markets for slaves and land, and who lived in a style that advertised their status to all.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ R.C.-H. Shell, 'Samuel Hudson on Marriages and Other Customs at the Cape', *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* 15 (1989), 1.

⁵⁶ J. Barrow, *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa* (Cadell and Davies, London, 1806), volume 2, 110.

⁵⁷ Williams, 'Who, What, Where and When', 100-101.

Elite in Power

By the mid-eighteenth century, colonial society at the Cape of Good Hope had become settled into a social hierarchy. At the top of this hierarchy were the VOC senior officials, 'followed by lower ranking VOC employees, the burgher elite, other burghers, and finally, an underclass that consisted of free blacks, soldiers, sailors and slaves. Economic growth eventually led to the development of a relatively stable class of burgher elite at the Cape by the end of the eighteenth century.'⁵⁸

Because of the social prestige of certain positions within Cape society, the burgher elite vied against one another to fill social positions. Members of the burgher elite additionally also held the highest offices in the burgher militia and would often serve as elders or deacons in the church councils of the Dutch Reformed Church.⁵⁹ In a society where any form of acknowledged social prestige through political power or representation would have been essential for the establishment of an individual or family as part of the elite, these positions were significant indicators of status. Many of the elite burghers were appointed time and again to such positions. Additionally, members of this 'administrative' group of the burgher elite were often family-bound with grandfathers, fathers and other male relatives of many of the members of the Burgher Council preceding them in that function, or in a comparable function, such as serving as a member of the *heemraad* in the rural districts.⁶⁰ Burghers could also serve as members of the Orphan Chamber or as Commissioners of Civil and Marriage Affairs. In this regard, we see Jacob van Reenen being re-elected to the position of member of the Orphan Chamber in December of 1755 after having stepped down in 1750.⁶¹ Jacob van Reenen also later served as a member of the Burgher Council, stepping

⁵⁸ L. Oberholzer, 'Free Burgher Women in the Eighteenth Century and the Quest for Status', *Historia* 62, 1 (2017), 5. Cf. N. Ulrich, 'Counter Power and Colonial Rule in the Eighteenth-Century Cape of Good Hope: Belongings and Protest of the Labouring Poor' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2011), 21 and N. Ulrich, 'Cape of Storms: Surveying and Rethinking Popular Resistance in the Eighteenth-Century Cape Colony', *New Contree* 73 (2015).

⁵⁹ Williams, 'Who, What, Where and When', 100.

⁶⁰ CA, C 167, Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 306-43 (per Tanap).

⁶¹ CA, C 133, Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 436-91 (per Tanap).

down in 1777.⁶² In 1784, Petrus Johannes Truter was elected to become a Commissioner of Civil and Marriage Affairs.⁶³

Although the VOC ultimately stayed in control of its settlement, it wanted to obtain a certain measure of co-operation from the ever growing burgher population, because without their cooperation, there could have been a potential for conflict. The Cape government therefore instituted a system of representation for the burgher population, called the *burgerraad* (Burgher Council). Initially this representation was quite limited with the number of Burgher Councillors at first only numbering about two or three, but towards the end of the eighteenth century, the *burgerraad* had developed into its own separate body.⁶⁴ Although the VOC held the real power, the Burgher Council organised such tasks as supervising the *Ratelwagt* (night watch), controlling the burgher butchers and bakers, and taking care of maintaining the roads and bridges in the town and district. The Burgher Councillors raised taxes from the burghers in the Cape District in order to perform this role.⁶⁵ By 1685, the VOC administration decided that the Burgher Councillors could take part in some of the meetings of the Cape's second highest administrative body, the Council of Justice that served as the judicial authority at the Cape. During the early years of the settlement, the governor served as the chair of the council, but from 1734, the *secunde* fulfilled this position. The Fiscal acted as secretary and prosecutor when hearing cases and from 1658, two members of the burgher council served on the Council of Justice when cases involving members or the burgher class were heard. From 1783, the council consisted of a president, a member of the Council of Policy, six company officials and six members of the Burgher Council.⁶⁶ Despite the creation of the Burgher Council, free burghers did not have much say in the greater administration of the settlement at the Cape.

⁶² CA, C 156, Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 364-88 (per Tanap).

⁶³ CA, C 167, Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 306-43 (per Tanap).

⁶⁴ It is important to note that an appointed to the Burgher Council was not the outcome of a democratic process. The Burgher Council submitted a shortlist of nominated candidates to the VOC Council of Policy, which then appointed its preferred candidates.

⁶⁵ T. Baartman, 'Fighting for the Spoils: Cape *Burgerschap* and Faction Disputes in Cape Town in the 1770s', (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 2011), 115.

⁶⁶ G.G. Visagie, *Regspleging en Reg aan die Kaap van 1652 tot 1806, met Bespreking van die Historiese Agtergrond* (Juta, Cape Town, 1969), 42-44.

By the 1780s, burgher agitation over the lack of representation had grown significantly leading to the development of the Patriot Movement. A significant event occurred on a night in May 1778, when a letter and pamphlet was distributed in the streets of Cape Town attacking the VOC government and its employees for misadministration and private trade. An appeal was made to the burghers to sign a petition appealing to the governor and, if necessary, to the Dutch States General.⁶⁷ This attack on the VOC government and its employees is in many ways a watershed moment. It speaks to a significant increase in the desire for independence from the Dutch East India Company, even for self-determination. This desire for greater representation was not merely confined to certain groups amongst the free burgher population. In 1779, all three serving Burgher Councillors, Cornelis van der Poel, Christiaan George Maasdorp and Gerrit Hendrik Meijer, decided against the VOC government and submitted a request to the Political Council to send a delegation to the Netherlands in order to address burgher concerns.⁶⁸ In the end, the Patriot Movement was not very successful as most of the demands made by the burghers were denied, except for the removal of certain VOC officials. However, this movement does provide a glimpse into the mentality of the population living at the Cape. The population had grown significantly with many of the prominent burgher families having lived at the Cape for several generations. Many burghers felt that they were so entrenched in the local system that they deserved greater political representation. This would have been particularly glaring in a community where the distinction between wealthy burghers and VOC officials often became blurred through intermarriage and family connections.

Over time, the gentry started to achieve a relatively high degree of influence over the lower rungs of government. By the first decade of the nineteenth century, some wealthy families, among whose ranks numbered both farmers and officials, and who were connected through marriage to other members of the upper strata of society, had started to influence the lower organs of government. Some of these prominent burghers functioned as the political link between the government and the white farming community – especially during the turbulent years after 1795. Since this group stayed politically relevant, it did not much matter which

⁶⁷ Baartman, 'Fighting for the Spoils', 23-24.

⁶⁸ Baartman, 'Fighting for the Spoils', 121.

new European group took control of the Cape, since they provided a degree of continuity while also incorporating elite members of the new arrivals.⁶⁹

During the final years of the eighteenth century, the power of the *heemraden* in the rural districts also grew significantly due to concessions from the central government. *Heemraden* were allowed more autonomy in dealing with various local administrative functions. This power was particularly nestled with the farming elite of the different districts.⁷⁰ In this regard, we also see some of the prominent burgher families of the day rise to power. Individuals such as Hendrik Cloete was elected as member of the *Heemraad* of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein in 1765. In these lower levels of local government, these men managed to act out considerable political power in the public sphere. This power transcended into various other positions. The same Hendrik Cloete was elected to serve as church elder in 1768 for the church at Stellenbosch.⁷¹ Later he also served as the Captain of the Fourth Company *Dragonders* in the district of Stellenbosch.

Because of the initial expansion of global interaction during the period spanning between 1500 and 1800, the Cape of Good Hope was first settled and established as an outpost of the Dutch East India Company. Because of the fact that the Cape had relatively few resources necessary for trade, and because the only reason for the settlement was to establish a refreshment station for passing ships, no long-term plan was made for establishing a permanent colony. The original VOC plan for the settlement in Table Bay included only the building of a fort and the laying out of a garden. Nonetheless, the settlement grew steadily over the course of the next few decades. An independent burgher class was formed that could farm (within the boundaries of Company rule) in order to provide to the growing need for fresh produce. Out of this group sprouted the beginnings of the urban and landed burgher class, which each developed along its own economic lines.

⁶⁹ Of the fifteen individuals who became burgher councillors during the 1780s, five were direct descendants of *pachters* while most of the other members had family ties to earlier or contemporary *pachters*. This is an indication how wealth through entrepreneurial enterprise was directly linked to social prestige and status. It is also significant that many *pachters* were members of the burgher militia, a body that was also very much concerned with rank and status, see G. Groenewald, 'A Class Apart: Symbolic Capital, Consumption and Identity among the Alcohol Entrepreneurs of Cape Town, 1680-1795', *South African Journal of Cultural History* 26, 1 (2012), 27-28.

⁷⁰ Ross, 'Rise of the Cape Gentry', 197.

⁷¹ CA, C 146, Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 263-91 (per Tanap).

Out of these different groups, an elite burgher class was established that was anchored in strong family networks. This class started to gain more and more political power over the course of the eighteenth century, to a point where social elites were almost synonymous with political elites amongst the burgher class.



CHAPTER 3

Transitional Governments at the Cape of Good Hope, 1795 – c. 1820

During the latter part of the eighteenth century, the influence that the Dutch East India Company exerted over the settled society at the Cape declined. This decline can be attributed to three main reasons: firstly, the VOC's economic health started to decline after 1780 and the Company started to run at a loss. Secondly, the VOC's market share of contribution to the local economy at the Cape started to decrease after 1771. From this date onwards, more foreign ships called at the Cape per year than Dutch ships, reducing the Dutch contribution to the local economy. And, finally, the wealth of the local elite grew significantly.¹ This group, as shown in the previous chapter, exercised some local political power – although this remained within the limits that the Company permitted. At a social level, a definite divide between many burghers and the VOC elite existed, in spite of some intermarriage over the preceding years. Between 1778 and 1786, a movement developed among many of the wealthier burghers called the 'Patriot Movement', which attempted to improve the position of burghers in political, economic and social terms.² By the time that the Revolutionary Wars (1792-1799) had broken out in Europe, the situation at the Cape was ripe for social and political change.

By 1795, the burghers living in the colony faced various issues. In reality burghers had relatively little political influence or power, while they witnessed the Company's maladministration of both the local affairs and the company interest. One of the effects of the absence of real political representation was that the VOC had no desire to let the burgher population engage in international trade, as their principal focus was not to establish a stable and successful colony, but to gain profits from the refreshment station and any trade that may result from their tenure of it. This meant that there was very little development in local industry at the Cape that would have served to stimulate the local economy. This policy led to the situation that there were very few business opportunities outside of Cape Town but agriculture. As already indicated, in Cape Town many free burghers ran taverns and

¹ R. Ross, *Beyond the Pale: Essays on the History of Colonial South Africa* (Wesleyan University Press, London & Hanover, 1993), 26.

² C. Beyers, *Die Kaapse Patriotte gedurende die Laaste Kwart van die Agtiende Eeu, en die Voortlewing van hul Denkbeelde* (Juta, Pretoria, 1967).

boarding houses. Besides a few skilled artisanal and other trades, there was very few other economic opportunities.³

In terms of agriculture, the VOC benefitted from purchasing produce at very low prices because of the Company's monopolistic policies. Additionally, shortly before the First British Occupation, the Napoleonic Wars broke out in Europe, which had a significant effect on the Cape. Fewer ships travelled past the Cape resulting in a twofold problem: the settlement had a surplus of grain for which there was no international trade with subsequent shortages in consumer goods such as clothing, agricultural implements, coffee, tea and various other products.⁴ In addition, between 1772 and 1793 the number of free burghers increased by nearly two thirds, which resulted in an increase of grain and meat production as more individuals entered the farming sector. There was no international market to absorb this additional produce because of the breakdown of trade; consequently, burghers had an excess of produce with no market.⁵ The local population at the Cape were therefore feeling the effects of a settlement not open to free trade, which might even have prompted them to embrace British rule in the hope of gaining greater political power and financial success. During the last two years of Company rule at the Cape, the value of the paper *rixdaalder* fell drastically while coins were removed from circulation. The result was that there was little trust in the stability of the *rixdaalder*, and the price of consumer goods and services rose even higher. Consequently, Commissioners Sebastiaan Cornelius Nederburgh and Simon Hendrik Frykenius were sent to the Cape to reorganise the inefficient and expensive administration and to try to remedy these shortages by increasing taxes. This economic situation, the consequence of the wars in Europe as well as years of mismanagement and corruption by the VOC, had an intense effect on all ranks of burgher society.⁶

The First British Occupation, 1795-1803

The French Revolution of 1789 directly resulted in the start of the French Revolutionary Wars and the subsequent Napoleonic Wars (1803-1815). These wars were mainly fought

³ See chapter 2 above.

⁴ H. Giliomee, *Die Kaap tydens die Eerste Britse Bewind, 1803-1806* (Hollandsch Afrikaansche Uitgevers Maatschappij, Cape Town, 1975), 18.

⁵ Giliomee, *Kaap tydens die Eerste Britse Bewind*, 19.

⁶ H. Giliomee, *Die Afrikaners: 'n Biografie* (Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2004), 53.

between the French Republic and other large European powers, but had a far-reaching global effect. The republican ideals propagated during the French Revolution took root in the Netherlands, resulting in growing republicanism and the eventual overthrow of the Prince of Orange who was forced into exile.⁷ In England, the Prince of Orange appealed to the British authorities to ensure that Dutch trading posts be protected, and to prevent French forces from using them to their own advantage.⁸ On 7 February 1795, Prince William of Orange, at British insistence, issued orders in which the senior naval officer at the Cape of Good Hope was instructed to grant British warships free access in order to defend the Cape against the French fleet. Governor A.J. Sluysken was also instructed to permit British troops ashore. Britain's main aim was to ensure that Dutch outposts should come under British control and not under the control of the French. This regard for Dutch outposts was mainly because of their strategic value to the war effort, as well as importance for international trade. The Cape, in particular, was positioned on the seaway between Europe and Asia and was considered a great prize.⁹ If the Cape were to fall into French hands, it would endanger existing British trade routes with the East, effectively cutting off British dominions from the metropole. As British interests in India grew, it became more important for British interests to take an active role along the trade route to the east and to protect their economic interest.¹⁰ On 10 June 1795, the British navy landed at Muizenberg, intent on taking possession of the settlement.

News of the arrival of the British reached Sluysken, Commissioner at the Cape, on 11 June 1795. In an attempt to strengthen the garrison at Simon's Town, the Council of Policy dispatched men. In addition, a call-up was sent out to the burgher militia in the outlying districts to assist with the defence of the Cape, but burgher response was poor. With the Cape located so far from Europe, the Council had no idea whether or not the Dutch government was in support of the British, or at war with them. In fact, in a letter sent to

⁷ For more information on the growth of Patriotism in the Netherlands, cf. S. Schama, *Patriots and Liberators: Revolution in the Netherlands, 1780-1813* (Harper Collins, London, 2005).

⁸ I. Blom, 'Defence of the Cape Colony under Batavian Rule, 1803-1806', *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* 17 (1990), 20.

⁹ John McAleer's recent study demonstrates the importance of the Cape of Good Hope to this network of international trade, J. McAleer, *Britain's Maritime Empire: Southern Africa, the South Atlantic and the Indian Ocean, 1763-1820* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge 2016).

¹⁰ K.H. O'Rourke, 'The Worldwide Economic Impact of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars, 1793-1815', *Journal of Global History* 1 (2006), 123-49.

Johannes Andreas Truter (the later Sir John Andries Truter) by his friend, Willem Stephanus van Rijneveld on 30 June 1795, Van Rijneveld gives detail as to how information was prevented from reaching the Dutch administration. Van Rijneveld writes that letters sent by means of an American ship that entered Table Bay after the arrival of the British were confiscated and that the British prohibited contact with the captain of the American vessel. He further writes that Admiral Elphinstone 'at length informed us that he had intercepted and opened every one of the Dutch dispatches found on the American ship, but that he was sending over some of the documents, both official and private, after removing the newspapers which were all prejudiced in favour of the faction now in power.'¹¹ The most recent information they had received previous to this ship's arrival suggested that the Netherlands could change sides to support the French, and without more recent news, the Council of Policy had no way of knowing what the truth was.

In addition, the population living at the Cape were divided. Most of the VOC officials were loyal to the Prince of Orange and supported his rule, but many burghers had been part of the *Patriotten* (Patriot Movement) and were opposed to the rule of the stadtholder.¹² In addition, despite the political opinions of many burghers, a sizeable number of them no longer wished to be under the control of the VOC.¹³ The first contact that Admiral Elphinstone made with the Council of Policy was a request for Commissioner Sluysken and Colonel Gordon to join him on board his ship to discuss 'matters of great concern'.¹⁴ In the end, the Council replied in a way that would neither please the British, nor openly encourage them to attack. In the meantime, the Council had prepared to defend the Cape. Van Rijneveld wrote that 'caution dictated that we should be on our guard' and alarm guns were fired to signal that all standing men should report to their allotted posts.¹⁵ On Admiral Elphinstone's request for capitulation, the Council responded that the Cape would welcome British help in the event of a French attack, but that the Cape was very capable of defending

¹¹ M. Boucher & N. Penn (eds.), *Britain at the Cape, 1795 to 1803* (Brenthurst Press, Johannesburg, 1992), 35.

¹² From the fifteenth to the late eighteenth century, the head of state of the United Provinces of the Netherlands was known as the *stadhouder* or stadtholder.

¹³ T. Potgieter & A. Grundlingh, 'Admiral Elphinstone and the Conquest and Defence of the Cape of Good Hope, 1795-1796', *Scientia Militaria: South African Journal of Military Studies* 35, 2 (2007), 47.

¹⁴ Letter from Willem Stephanus van Rijneveld to Johannes Andreas Truter, 30 June 1795, Boucher & Penn, *Britain at the Cape*, 25.

¹⁵ Potgieter & Grundlingh, 'Admiral Elphinstone', 47.

itself. General Craig visited Cape Town in an attempt to convince the Council of Policy to hand over authority, but they once more declined and emphasised their commitment to defending both the Cape and the constitution of the Dutch Republic.¹⁶

Elphinstone and Craig attempted to sell the British occupation of the Cape to the burgher and administrative population by representing the British as liberators and protectors who sought to defend the inhabitants against French invasion and certain 'misery and destruction'.¹⁷ Elphinstone reported to the Council that:

the entire Republic of the United Netherlands had been conquered by the French...; that our whole navy, as well as Vice-Admiral van Kingsbergen had fallen into the French hands; that...Van Kingsbergen, the State Pensionary, the Greffier and other leading officials had been taken into custody; that His Highness had retired to England with his esteemed family...[and that the British King had sent a fleet]..in order to help the Cape in any hostile attack by the French; that having nothing but friendly aims in view, they therefore trusted not only to be able to obtain facilities for the fleet from the colony, but also that they would be looked upon as friends...¹⁸

To add to this point, the British stressed the protection of private property and trade, and claimed that there would be little change to the customs and laws of the people living at the Cape. Moreover, Craig promised that the burghers would be granted much more favourable trade relations than under the VOC – a point of contestation for many of the burghers who had previously supplied goods to the Company, and an alluring idea to those who sought to enter a free trade market.¹⁹ The Council of Policy was, however, not fooled by British intentions. Van Rijneveld writes in a letter to Truter,

it now appeared that Mr Elphinstone, far from being anxious to help protect the colony from a foreign attack, as has seemed to be the case from his first

¹⁶ Potgieter & Grundlingh, 'Admiral Elphinstone', 47.

¹⁷ Letter from Admiral Elphinstone and General Craig to Commissioner Sluysken and the Council of Policy, HMS Monarch, 26 June 1795, G.M. Theal (ed.), *Records of the Cape Colony, 1793-1831: Copied for the Cape Government, from the Manuscript Documents in the Public Record Office* (Forgotten Books Publishers, London, 2012), volume 1, 78.

¹⁸ Letter from Willem Stephanus van Rijneveld to Johannes Andreas Truter, 30 June 1795, Boucher & Penn, *Britain at the Cape*, 25.

¹⁹ Potgieter & Grundlingh, 'Admiral Elphinstone', 48.

communications, had his eye on it for British interests and wanted to make himself master of it.²⁰

Despite the mistrust that the Council of Policy felt towards the British, the Colony was finally surrendered on 16 September 1795, and all those who remained had to take an oath of allegiance and fidelity to King George III. The submission of the burgher population was relatively smooth and uniform, as the promise of protection and free trade appeared to placate the gentry who simultaneously had most to lose in the annexation, but also had the most power to oppose it. Many of the soldiers and the poorer class of burghers saw their officers as traitors who had purposefully put up a poor defence. As the Dutch garrison was marched out of the Castle to surrender, the soldiers jeered and swore at their officers, calling them traitors.²¹

After the occupation, John Barrow wrote:

Most of the members of the government were well disposed to the Prince of Orange, and had conducted themselves with propriety, were continued in office; and thus the plans of the Jacobin party were, for the present, completely defeated.²²

This is not to say that all the burghers living at the Cape by the time of the First British Occupation simply capitulated to and assimilated with the new regime. In fact, in this quote of Barrow, we see the underpinning of resistance in his reference to the 'Jacobin party' that he would likely have considered revolutionary. In this regard, we know that there was an undercurrent of dissatisfaction with the new occupying force and we see it manifested in various ways. Following the First Occupation, there was a small but significant diaspora of burghers from the settlement. Some individuals such as members of the Le Seuer family decided to return to the 'Fatherland' although they had strong roots in southern Africa. One of J.J le Seuer's sons left the settlement with Governor Sluysken on 12 November 1795, and was followed, shortly thereafter, by his father and mother, as well as some of the younger members of the family.²³ In other instances, opposition to the new British

²⁰ Letter from Willem Stephanus van Rijneveld to Johannes Andreas Truter, 30 June 1795, Boucher & Penn, *Britain at the Cape*, 27.

²¹ Potgieter & Grundlingh, 'Admiral Elphinstone', 52.

²² K. Schoeman, *Swanesang: Die Einde van die Kompanjiestyd aan die Kaap, 1771-1795* (Protea, Pretoria, 2016), 456.

²³ Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 457.

government resulted in banishment from the colony. One example is that of P.J. Delport, who refused to swear the oath of allegiance. He was banished and sent to the Netherlands where, it is assumed, he died.²⁴ Others simply decided to distance themselves as much as possible from the new establishment: one prominent case being William Ferdinand van Reede van Oudtshoorn,²⁵ a former member of the Council of Policy who was the only one not to sign the articles of capitulation.²⁶ Lady Anne writes of him that he 'had sold his House in town & retired to this distance that he might live apart from all society...'²⁷

Consolidation of Power

Initially there was some confusion regarding the role that the new British occupiers would play at the Cape. Before taking over the settlement, the British declared that they were sent 'to preserve the Colony for the States General and to protect and defend the Inhabitants from the misery and destruction which must ensue from the French obtaining possession of it.'²⁸ Yet, after the occupation, there was no reference to its actual overlord, the Prince of Orange, in any official documentation. In fact, the occupiers hoisted the British flag and proclaimed the King of Britain the sovereign lord of the settlement. Henceforth, all who wanted to remain in the settlement had to take an oath of allegiance to the British monarch.²⁹

After the occupation of the Cape, there was reconciliation between the occupying British establishment and the existing elite that performed functions of governance. The Cape Dutch elite that held official positions such as clergymen continued to serve in that capacity, bridging the gap between the established burgher population and the new government. In this process, men like Johannes Andries Truter, who was the President of the Council of Justice, were crucial allies to ensure a smooth transition from the VOC government to a new British government. In fact, in order to ensure a stable transition of power from the VOC to the new English administration, it would have been of utmost importance for the new elite

²⁴ Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 458.

²⁵ William Ferdinand was the son of Baron Pieter van Reede van Oudtshoorn, a member of both the Councils of Justice and Policy at the Cape. In 1760, he became *secunde* before retiring to the Netherlands. In 1772, he decided to return once again to the Cape and was appointed governor but died during the voyage to the Cape.

²⁶ Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 458.

²⁷ Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 458.

²⁸ Letter from Admiral Elphinstone and General Craig to Commissioner Sluysken and the Council of Policy, HMS Monarch, 26 June 1795, Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, volume 1, 78.

²⁹ Giliomee, *Kaap tydens die Eerste Britse Bewind*, 35.

to maintain at least cordial if not close relations with the established burgher elite. Of these, there were a number of families who played significant roles in various aspects of the settlement's administration. As such, it would have been wise to have them supporting the new British government rather than actively opposing it.

Despite this need to have cordial relationships with the local establishment, the English who occupied the Cape did not have much regard for the white inhabitants of the colony. The burgher population was viewed by some as lazy and gluttonous, living only for the pleasures of auctions and gambling. This is evidenced to a greater and lesser extent in the writing of many of the English visitors to the Cape, in particular in the travel writings of John Barrow.³⁰ Interestingly enough, despite his remarks on the Dutch, Barrow ended up marrying Anna Maria Truter, a local-born woman belonging to the very society that he criticised. However, Barrow seems to have held the same prejudices of many of the occupying British rather than being the exception to the rule. Samuel Hudson, a former English servant, remarks on why marriage with the new British elite was relatively acceptable so soon after the annexation of the Cape in 1795:

Wedding(s) here are too frequently conducted *without* that violence of affection or sincere regard so very requisite to constitute real happiness. The first consideration is In what style shall I move thro' Life if I marry this Man? If the prospect seems pleasing it is no way necessary to feel any other regard but this. The question is put. The Friends are consulted and as there is no objection on the part of the Lady they are fashionably married not according to the Divine Institution of that Holy Ceremony but is in every sense of the word little better than a Lawful prostitution.³¹

³⁰ J. Barrow, *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa* (Cadell and Davies, London, 1806), volume 2, 102. Barrow describes a male head of the household: 'The lazy glutton safe at home will keep, indulge his sloth, and fatten with his sleep.' He scathingly remarks further that Cape Dutch men seem to spend the greater part of the day in bed and only rises because he finally finds his bed irksome. Similar descriptions litter Barrow's comments on the Dutch population living at the Cape. Also see, A. Sparrman, *A Voyage to the Cape of Good Hope* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1975), 58, 68, 69.

³¹ R. C.-H. Shell, 'Samuel Hudson on Marriages and Other Customs at the Cape', *Kronos: Journal of Cape History* 15 (1989), 51.

Lady Anne Barnard, wife of Andrew Barnard, the Colonial Secretary appointed to the Cape during the First British Occupation, also comments on such marriages, clearly implying that especially soldiers wasted very little time in acquiring wives at the Cape:

...it really appears as if the English men married the Dutch girls to save their lodging money for they all live with the fathers in law after – how they will repent when their Regt [*sic*] are ordered to move & the time is up they have sold themselves for – Erskine to they say is certainly to marry the second du Wal the admirals love, but as he seems the bosom toad of the general, I dare say he will say 'Cupid by your leave' & will wait till the General leads the way or probably marry the same day...³²

It appears, therefore, that contemporaries saw the marriage of burgher women to the British establishment after the annexation of 1795 as a means to an end – on both sides of the marriage. On the one hand, the army regiments that occupied the Cape were all male, while wives (in the instance that some of the British elite, officers and soldiers that occupied the Cape were married) rarely travelled out to the colonies with their husbands.³³ In this regard, Lady Anne was an exception, while the reluctance of Lord Macartney's wife to travel to the colony was the norm.³⁴ In the event that these men were not married, the only marriage prospects for the foreseeable future would have been the local population of burgher women. Added to that, the women of the Cape traditionally paid much heed to the social status and position that a marriage could afford. This was particularly prevalent under the VOC rule that ended in 1795, where the position of a woman was dictated by the social and political positions of her husband, irrespective of who their own family was. This tradition had been ingrained in the burgher population since the founding of the settlement, and it can be assumed that it would have continued for some time after the First British Occupation. Therefore, burgher women would most likely not have balked at the prospect of marrying into the new government elite, and in fact did so in great numbers as the

³² M. Lenta, & B. Le Cordeur (eds.), *The Cape Diaries of Lady Anne Barnard, 1799-1800* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1999), 331-32.

³³ The fact that British immigration was largely male may have contributed to the fact that complete anglicisation of the Cape never occurred. The same trend has been established regarding German immigration in earlier decades. German immigrants were mainly male and were able to establish themselves within the colonial Cape network through marriages with local women.

³⁴ Lady Macartney did not travel to the Cape with her husband upon his appointment, which in effect made Lady Anne Barnard the 'first woman' of the Cape in terms of protocol. It is for this reason that she played such a significant role in the social interaction between the new colonising elite and the existing burgher elite.

established elite tried to consolidate their positions in the new society that developed after 1795.

Changes in Policy

George Macartney was inaugurated as Governor of the Cape on 5 May 1797. With his inauguration, the Cape formally became a colony of Great Britain. All power was concentrated in the hands of the governor who acted as the appointed agent of the Crown. After his inauguration, Macartney instituted several administrative, financial and social reforms. The British revoked many of the economic restrictions that the Company had previously imposed on the settlement. Despite some economic and social changes, much of the political structures that had existed before the British takeover survived this change in government. The main reason for this is that the new government in Cape Town could not impose new policies in the outlying districts without having the cooperation of the existing local elite. This included those who belonged to the *heemraden* who were from amongst the most notable individuals in the different districts.³⁵

One of the institutional changes that did take place after the First British Occupation was the dissolution of the Council of Policy. The Council of Policy was the highest authority of the VOC at the Cape of Good Hope and had ruled the settlement between its establishment in 1652 and the VOC's removal in 1795. This Council had the authority to make decisions on all-important issues concerning the colony. Concerning changes to the local authorities, the Council of Commissioners, which resorted under the Council of Justice, was dissolved. This was because the only reason for a differentiation between the Burgher Council and the Council of Commissioners was that those belonging to the Council of Commissioners were VOC officials. With the removal of the VOC from power, there was no longer a need for this body and the functions of the Council of Commissioners were transferred to the Burgher Council and was subsequently referred to by the British as the Burgher Senate.³⁶ Although a number of governmental changes followed the change in regime, it was the intention of the British government to retain the existing legal system at the Cape. Roman-Dutch law as it had been practised since the inception of the settlement remained the legal system of the Cape, except for the abolishment of judicial torture.³⁷ It is in this instance understandable

³⁵ Ross, *Beyond the Pale*, 32.

³⁶ Giliomee, *Kaap tydens die Eerste Britse Bewind*, 88-89.

³⁷ Giliomee, *Kaap tydens die Eerste Britse Bewind*, 97.

why the new government chose to keep individuals such as Johannes Andries Truter in prominent judicial positions.

In terms of economic changes, as mentioned, the British authorities immediately attempted to win the favour of the colonial establishment by relaxing restrictions that had formerly been imposed by the VOC government. In a resolution of 18 September 1795, Clarke, Craig and Elphinstone state that the 'first wish of the British commanders is to adopt every measure which may appear proper to promote the prosperity of the settlement and the happiness of the inhabitants'.³⁸ It can be argued that this eagerness to reform the finances of the settlement and to ensure the subsequent 'happiness' of the subjects now under their control, could likely have been a method of reconciling the conquered inhabitants to their new overlords. In this regard, the British made a number of changes to the economic policies that existed at the Cape, which would likely have been popular amongst a number of burghers. Perhaps the most significant change to the economic sector of the Cape was the removal of the system of monopolies that had controlled the production and distribution of certain commodities. Shortly after the occupation, the British authorities announced that 'all persons so disposed are at liberty to exercise their several trades as best suit their inclinations, all persons desirous of so doing may set up a brewery or any other manufacture not under a general prohibition'.³⁹ The *pacht* system in particular had been very lucrative for a number of individuals and family complexes during the period of VOC rule. This system was abolished after the British occupation, and trade was significantly freed up with the implication that more people could actively partake in previously monopolised sectors of the economy. However, at the same time, a number of families suffered financially by the change.⁴⁰ The Cloete and Van Reenen families, in particular, were both actively involved in the *pacht* system and were likely affected by this significant alteration of existing trade regulations. A number of proclamations were passed relating to taxes. One example being the *vendu* (auction) taxes which were initially levied at 5% of all movable property and 2.5% of immovable property. The British altered this unpopular tax by exempting all purchases under the amount of 100 *rixdaalders*.⁴¹

³⁸ Naude, S.D. (ed.), *Kaapse Plakkaatboek, Deel V (1795-1803)* (Cape Times, Cape Town, 1950), 1.

³⁹ Naude, *Plakkaatboek*, V, 5.

⁴⁰ Giliomee, *Kaap tydens die Eerste Britse Bewind*, 92-93.

⁴¹ Giliomee, *Kaap tydens die Eerste Britse Bewind*, 37.

The occupation also had far-reaching effects on international trade for the local population. Under the VOC government, inhabitants of the settlement were allowed to trade only with areas on the western coast of Africa up to the 30th degree line, St Helena and with areas east of the Cape up to the 30th degree line and with the areas under the VOC control, with the exception of the areas east of the island of Java.⁴² After the occupation, however, trade was opened up to all free inhabitants of the colony. On 5 May 1797, Macartney passed an act allowing for the freeing up of trade in the Cape with all countries in alliance with Britain. This act states:

...it is hereby ordered that it shall be lawful until further order for all ships and vessels belonging to the subjects of any country or state in amity with His Majesty, to enter the ports of the said settlement of the Cape of Good Hope and of the territories and dependencies thereof, and to carry trade and traffic with the inhabitants of the said settlement and of the territories and dependencies thereof, and import and export to and from the post of the said settlement and of the territories and dependencies thereof, any goods, wares or merchandise whatsoever...⁴³

Under the First British Occupation, imports rose and inflation increased sharply. In 1798 alone, more than one million *rixdaalders* worth of British goods were imported to the Cape.⁴⁴ Changes were also made to the tax collection system and a number of new positions were created to streamline the collection of revenue. The positions of Receiver General, Receiver of Land Revenue and Receiver of Customs were created and together formed the Board of Revenue. This Board was in control of the renting out of government land, the leasing of saltpans and the issuing of alcohol licenses. Interestingly enough, these positions were filled by members of the burgher society at the Cape. The office of the Collector General was held by J.J. Rhenius; the Collector of Duty of imports and exports was held by C. Brand and the Collector of Land Revenue was held by J.P. Baumgardt.

In 1798, the Dutch East India Company (VOC) transferred its territories to the newly formed Batavian Republic and its claim to the Cape was, along with a number of other dominions, in the hands of the new state. The Batavian Republic was the successor of the Republic of

⁴² Giliomee, *Kaap tydens die Eerste Britse Bewind*, 154.

⁴³ Naude, *Plakkaatboek*, V, 78.

⁴⁴ Freund, W., 'The Cape under Transitional Governments, 1795-1814', in R. Elphick & H. Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840* (2nd edition, Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town, 1989), 328.

the Seven United Netherlands and was proclaimed on 19 January 1795. As the Batavian Republic was at this time a vassal state of France, its hold on these areas was constantly in flux due to the Napoleonic Wars. As early as 1799, Napoleon Bonaparte made a first proposal for truce to the British Foreign Secretary but was rejected. In mid-1801, these parties again commenced with negotiations and a preliminary agreement was signed in London on 30 September. The terms of this preliminary agreement required Britain to restore most of the French colonial possessions they had captured since 1794, to evacuate Malta, and to withdraw from other occupied Mediterranean ports. France had to restore Egypt to Ottoman control, withdraw from the Italian peninsula and agree to preserve Portuguese sovereignty. Ceylon was to remain a British territory and both sides would be permitted to make use of the Cape of Good Hope.⁴⁵ In November 1801, peace negotiations continued in France. The parties agreed that the Cape of Good Hope would be returned to Dutch rule, but that it would remain open to all nationalities as a refreshment and trade post.⁴⁶ The treaty was signed on 14 March 1802.⁴⁷

Batavian Government, 1803-1806

The Treaty of Amiens determined that: 'The port of the Cape of Good Hope remains to the Batavian republic in full sovereignty, in the same manner as it did previous to the war.'⁴⁸ The following year the Cape was transferred to Batavian rule.

The decree made by Lieutenant-General Dundas on 20 February 1803 states:

Whereas by the 3rd article of the treaty of peace concluded at Amiens on the 27th of March 1802, this settlement is agreed to be restored to the Batavian republic, which restoration will take place tomorrow, being Monday the 21st of February 1803. These are to signify to all the inhabitants of this Colony of every description, and to all others (not subjects of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland) who have taken the oath of allegiance to His Britannic Majesty, that, from the day above mentioned, they are absolved from the said oath, and return under the subjection of the Batavian

⁴⁵ J.D. Wilson, 'The Anglo-Dutch Imperial Meridian in the Indian Ocean World, 1795-1820' (Unpublished PhD thesis, Cambridge University, 2019), 23.

⁴⁶ W. Cobbett, *Cobbett's Annual Registry, Volume 1, January to June 1802* (Cox and Baylis, London, 1802), 322-327.

⁴⁷ Blom, 'Defence of the Cape Colony', 20.

⁴⁸ Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 467.

Government. In order however to prevent confusion, the several colleges, and all the civil servants of this Government charged with the police, administration of justice, or of finance, are at the instance of His Excellency the Commissary-General, required for the present, and until further orders, to continue the functions of their several offices; and all the inhabitants are warned to continue to obey the same.⁴⁹

With the return of the Cape to Dutch hands, the new Batavian Republic attempted to introduce its revolutionary ideas and ideals on its colonial society. The Cape was significantly more efficient and financially viable than it had been under Company rule, but that did not mean that it was without issues. Jacob Abraham Uitenhage de Mist and General Jan Willem Janssens were sent to the Cape in order to bring the settlement into the fold of the Batavian Republic. De Mist's ideal was to turn southern Africa into a thriving colony. His main aim was to implement a memorandum proposing reforms that would make the colony both prosperous and orderly.⁵⁰ One of his first acts upon arrival at the Cape was to implement a report that he had written in 1802 on the state of the colony. This report, *The memorandum of Commissary J.A. de Mist containing recommendations for the form and administration of government at the Cape of Good Hope* detailed various aspects of the administration and financial position of the Cape.⁵¹ The purpose of the report was to determine the future government of the Cape, but it ranged widely over social, economic and political conditions of the Cape at the end of the turn of the century.⁵² Much of De Mist's report was based on VOC records and the travel accounts of visitors, but it also took into account the findings of Nederburg and Frykenius. These individuals had been sent to the Cape by the Directors of the Dutch East India Company in 1792 as Commissioners-General in order to inspect the settlement. They had the instruction to carry out reforms at the settlement and stayed at the Cape for almost a year. In their report on the state of the Colony, they describe the situation on arrival in the following terms:

We found the large majority of the settlers financially ruined, and not in a position to recover themselves; the Rolls of the Council of Justice filled at every session with

⁴⁹ Naude, *Plakkaatboek*, V, 293.

⁵⁰ Freund, 'Cape under the Transitional Governments', 325.

⁵¹ Interestingly, this report was compiled from travel accounts of the Cape, particularly John Barrow's, even before De Mist set foot in the Cape.

⁵² J.A. de Mist, *Memorandum Containing Recommendations for the Form and Administration of Government at the Cape of Good Hope, 1802* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1920).

summons for the payment of debts; execution following upon execution ... the value of property in consequence fallen to a very low figure, and rich and poor threatened to total ruin. All these misfortunes called forth general expressions of dissatisfaction and bitterness against the Government on all sides... The above is a brief but accurate sketch of the state of affairs in which we found the Colony on our arrival.⁵³

Little significant change had occurred on the economic front during the First British Occupation. Freund states that 'the limited resources or commitments of the regimes did not allow for much innovation, and the economic problems of the Cape remained similar in 1814 to what they had been twenty years earlier.'⁵⁴ While the first half of the annexation of the Cape was beneficial for the inhabitants of the Cape because of the expansion of trade, the second half turned out to be not as promising. The decline in demand for agricultural products and the increase of control by the authorities led to a decline in economic growth. The increase in trade during the annexation did not lead to long-term economic growth because of the fact that existing capital was used for trade and new capital did not enter the economy. Agriculture and manufacturing also suffered due to a shortage of labour, which made it impossible to manufacture or produce products on large scale for export. De Mist and Janssens were both quickly disillusioned with the situation at the Cape and it is indicative that neither of these men advocated recovering the Cape as a possession after it was annexed for a second time by the British in 1806.⁵⁵

Besides the economic situation at the Cape, De Mist also reported on various social aspects relevant to the settlement. In a letter of 12 March 1803, less than six weeks after the Cape was returned to the new Dutch government, de Mist wrote to the State Government: 'The Parties here seem to me to be as fiercely and bitterly opposed to each other, as were the parties in the Fatherland in the first few years after the revolution of 1795.'⁵⁶

The two parties were:

one of which was nicknamed Anglomaniacs and the other, by way of retort Jacobins, and I dare safely assert that, as far as most are concerned, both these nicknames are most unjust. Apart from a few hot-heads ... it has been my experience that

⁵³ P.J. Idenburg, *The Cape of Good Hope at the Turn of the Eighteenth Century* (Leiden, Universitaire Pers, 1964), 40.

⁵⁴ Freund, 'Cape under the Transitional Governments', 327.

⁵⁵ Freund, 'Cape under the Transitional Governments', 325.

⁵⁶ Idenburg, *Cape of Good Hope*, 55.

amongst the most important of the last officiating Government officials there were many wise level-headed men, to whom it should not be imputed as a crime that they kept several departments of administration in their own hands rather than abandoning everything to a completely English Government – and a military one at that. And amongst the private citizens who by party spirits were given the disgraceful name of Jacobins, I have also met so many good, industrious and honourable men, that I have come to the conclusion that I must respect their general point of view. Either from sincere attachment, which I have certainly come across, or from resentment against those who had allowed themselves to be employed by the British Government, which will also have been the secret motive in the other case of many – however this may be, the love of the old Mother Country and attachment to the present Batavian Government, is the shibboleth of this party to whom, it seems to me, the majority of the residents in Cape Town and practically all colonists in the country districts belong.⁵⁷

It is interesting that here De Mist himself refers to those individuals who stayed on to be employed by the British government after the annexation of the Cape in 1795. It seems that De Mist almost views their service as honourable, instead of allowing the British to hold complete control; they stayed on in service in order to serve the needs of the settlement in their various capacities. His view is very pragmatic, stating that in many cases he has sympathy with both sides of the political divide: those who assisted the British in implementing their rule ('Anglomaniacs') and those who vehemently opposed British rule ('Jacobins').⁵⁸

Despite financial concerns and contesting political currents among the local inhabitants, De Mist and Janssens did manage to bring about relatively substantial change during the three years of Batavian rule. De Mist made various changes to the administration of the colony,

⁵⁷ Idenburg, *Cape of Good Hope*, 56.

⁵⁸ The families who will be discussed in subsequent chapters are especially interesting in this regard. The Van Reenen family in particular was well known to belong to the 'Jacobin' party of the Cape. Lady Anne Barnard refers to some of the Van Reenen brothers as being under the suspicion of the British government. On the other hand, the Truter family, with Sir John Andries Truter in particular, was closely associated with the British government during the First British Occupation and, as such, would have been considered as belonging to the 'Anglomaniacs'.

amongst others, reinstating the Council of Policy, which forthwith consisted of mostly newly arrived Dutchmen. In his *Memorandum* he states:

The whole Governmental system of the Cape settlement should forthwith consist of: A Governor and Four Councillors, assisted by a Secretary of the Government. The office of Secunde, or Lieutenant Governor, are for very many reasons, unnecessary and costly, and therefore harmful. The special instructions for each of them shall indicate the limits of their powers and obligations. The Governor will be sent, as far as possible, from the Motherland.⁵⁹

Despite this change, Governor Janssens had little time for the councillors and much of the political power of the colony was held by him and the Council of Policy was completely dependent on the governor to wield any real power. Further administrative changes included the creation of two new districts and the instituting of new regulations that determined the duties of local administrators.⁶⁰ As a successor to the Burgher Senate, a democratically elected Municipal Council was formed with the main task of levying taxes and ensuring various municipal conditions such as organising education, security, the infrastructure and public order of the urban areas. The efficacy of this body was, however, very limited.⁶¹

Regarding the judiciary, some reforms were instituted but overall many of the changes imposed during the First British Occupation were adopted. De Mist suggested a further professionalisation of the justice system, which resulted in the requirement that the seven councillors of the Council of Justice had to be trained lawyers.⁶² In 1804, new marriage legislation was instituted which determined that rural administrators were allowed to marry

⁵⁹ De Mist, *Memorandum*, 73. My translation, original Dutch: 'De geheel politicque Regeering der Caabsche Volksplanting, zou voortaan behooren te bestaan: In een Gouverneur en Vier Raaden, geadsisteerd, door een Secretaris van het Gouvernement. Men houdt het Ambt van Secunde, of Lieutenant Gouverneur, om zeer veele redenen, nodeloos en kostbaar, en over zulks schaadlyk. De byzondere Instructien voor elk derzelven, zullen de byzondere limiten van hunne magt en verplichtingen, aanwyzen. De Gouverneur zal zo veel mooglyk een dienstig, altyd, uit het Moederland, derwaards worden gezonden.'

⁶⁰ M. van der Burg, 'The Age of Revolutions at the Cape of Good Hope, 1780-830: Contradictions and Connections', *Journal of Colonialism and Colonial History* 16, 2 (2015), 13.

⁶¹ Van der Burg, 'Age of Revolutions', 14.

⁶² Van der Burg, 'Age of Revolutions', 13.

people in outlying districts, which meant that it was no longer necessary to travel to Cape Town to get married.⁶³

The Batavian rule at the Cape was short lived. A few months after Janssens and De Mist took power at the Cape, war broke out again in Europe on 18 May 1803. On 4 January 1806, the signals on Lion Mountain warned that British warships were arriving in the bay. Janssens tried to organise civilians and troops to defend the Cape while a fleet of 63 ships commanded by Admiral Sir Popham and Major-General Sir David Baird with 6 659 men anchored in Table Bay.⁶⁴ Major-General Baird was familiar with the Cape, as he had served there during the First British Occupation. His troops landed at Losperd Bay and advanced on Cape Town. The defence crumbled and Janssens was forced to surrender the settlement.⁶⁵ On 27 January 1806, he wrote to Pensionary Schimmelpenninck:

It is my most painful duty to have to report to Your Excellency that the entire Settlement has been forced to yield to the enormous superiority in numbers of the British forces. On the tenth of this [month] the Capital surrendered and, on the eighteenth, I with the remnants of a defeated small Corps d'armee in the Hottentot Holland Mountains, was forced to do the same.⁶⁶

Had the Batavian government at the Cape lasted longer, it would have been interesting to see what reforms they would have implemented. Their revolutionary ideas (including ideas about abolishing slavery) would have had a significant effect on the settlement if they had had time to implement it. Notwithstanding, the British took control of the Cape of Good Hope for a second time.

The Second British Occupation, 1806 -

After the British took control of the Cape, the Batavian troops were sent back to the Netherlands at the expense of the British. Borchers later wrote in his memoirs:⁶⁷

⁶³ Van der Burg, 'Age of Revolutions', 15.

⁶⁴ W. Steenkamp, 'The Battle of Blaauwberg 200 Years Ago', *Military History Journal* 13, 4 (2005).

⁶⁵ U. A. Seeman, 'The British Military Occupation of the Cape, 1795-1815: The Case of the York Redoubt.' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 2001), 28.

⁶⁶ Idenburg, *Cape of Good Hope*, 10.

⁶⁷ Borchers, too, was closely related to the prominent burgher families at the Cape. His one sister, Anna Borchers, was married to Hendrik Cloete, son of Dirk Cloete.

[They are] not to be considered as prisoners of war, and not to serve against the British until after being landed in Holland; and when embarked to be treated in every respect as British troops. Cape Town castle and circumjacent fortifications had previously surrendered, under capitulation dated 10th January, 1806, signed by Baron von Prophalver, Sir David Baird, and Sir Home Popham, in the presence of the late Sir John Truter and J. Palmer, at Papendorp, near Fort Knokke.⁶⁸

It is interesting that Truter was present at the signing of the capitulation of the Cape and all its fortifications. Borchers mentions Truter as the only Dutch individual present at the signing. This may be explained by the fact that Baird had previously been stationed at the Cape and that he knew Truter. Directly following the annexation of the Cape, General Baird assumed the role of acting governor. Upon arrival in Cape Town, he did not dismiss the existing government officials on condition that they take an oath of allegiance to the British monarchy. Upon hearing this condition, many officials decided to resign instead of staying on in their previous positions.⁶⁹ The powers of the position of Justice were reduced to the same level of influence the position had during the First British Occupation. Willem Stephanus van Rijnveld was appointed fiscal and vice-president of the Court of Justice.⁷⁰ Many other changes were made that returned the Cape to a similar administration as it had been during the First British Occupation. Andrew Barnard, husband of Lady Anne Barnard, was also restored to his original posting as Colonial Secretary.⁷¹ Following Baird's initial role as acting governor at the Cape, and except for a short relief from Sir George Grey in 1811, three successive governors were appointed to the Cape between 1806 and 1820:

- The Earl of Caledon (22 May 1807 – 14 July 1811)
- Sir John Cradock (6 September 1811 – 5 April 1814)

⁶⁸ P.B. Borchers, *An Auto-Biographical Memoir: Being a Plain Narrative of Occurrences from Early Life to Advanced Age, Chiefly Intended for his Children and Descendants, Countrymen and Friends* (Robertson, Cape Town, 1861), 260.

⁶⁹ An example of this were the Justices of the High Court. Most of the justices resigned because of these conditions except for two, Justices Strubberg and Hiddingh.

⁷⁰ Under VOC administration, this body was called the Council of Justice but became known as the Court of Justice under British rule.

⁷¹ Seeman, 'British Military Occupation of the Cape', 28-29.

- Lord Charles Somerset (6 April 1814 – 13 January 1820)⁷²

As was to be expected, both Batavian and British governors were shaped by Enlightenment thinking, which favoured the forming of a new community and the destruction of ancient barriers of caste and estate. This aided a sort of continuance in government. The early British governors in this period and the Batavian rulers had similar aims, which aided a continuity in economic, social and administrative change.⁷³ This period, stretching roughly between 1806 and 1814, is referred to as the transitional period – a period during which relatively little administrative or legal changes occurred at the Cape, partly due to a lack of resources, and partly due to the fact that British interest in southern Africa had not yet been secured, and that the consolidation of their power depended on the resolution of European politics. In fact, by 1807, 84% of government posts in Cape Town were occupied by non-British Europeans.⁷⁴ The last thing the British occupiers wanted to do was to institute unpopular change while war was still ongoing in Europe. This, however, did not mean that all the inhabitants of the Cape were equally willing to accept British rule, and there are some instances noted in (for example) Borchers's memoirs that indicate this. There he relates false reports of invading enemy fleets aimed at scaring off the British occupiers and an attempt to shoot a British soldier. He recounts: 'In the same month a sentry upon duty at the barriers of the lower castle yard was fired at and wounded, and a reward of one thousand *rixdollars* offered to discover the perpetrator.'⁷⁵

Yet, overall, it appears that Baird's reconciliatory government shortly after the occupation earned him and the British regime as a whole respect from the local population. Upon his departure from the Cape in January 1807, after having handed over the Government to Lieutenant-General Grey,⁷⁶ the Court of Justice, the Burgher Council and ecclesiastic groups thanked him for his service and stated:

By your wise and well-directed measures for our internal government, together with the unparalleled discipline of the troops under Your Excellency's command, our rights

⁷² Freund, 'Cape under the Transitional Governments', 344.

⁷³ Freund, 'Cape under the Transitional Governments', 327.

⁷⁴ Wilson, 'The Dutch and the Second British Empire', 380.

⁷⁵ Borchers, *Autobiographical Memoir*, 299.

⁷⁶ Sir Henry Grey remained at the Cape as Commander-in-Chief after the appointment of the Earl of Caledon as governor.

have been guarded, and the whole colony enjoys at this moment a state of tranquillity and plenty seldom or ever realised. Though we have not a moment's doubt of the fatherly care of His Majesty to have appointed a successor every way qualified to fill the important situation of the Governor of the Cape of Good Hope, still, however, we cannot help expressing our sincere sorrow at the loss of Your Excellency; and we beg leave to assure Your Excellency that our gratitude for the blessings the colony has experienced under Your Excellency's Government will never be obliterated from our memory. Accept then, worthy sir, of our most heartfelt acknowledgments; and may the Almighty Giver of all Good grant Your Excellency every happiness and prosperity that life affords ; in which we may assure Your Excellency we are joined by every well-thinking inhabitant of the colony.⁷⁷

In the few years following the re-conquest of the Cape, the British government did start anglicising government structures gradually, but this process was very slow until 1814 when the Cape was once more formally transferred to Britain.⁷⁸ In fact, the Deputy Colonial Secretary, Henry Ellis, published a series of memoranda in 1821 addressed to Henry Goulburn, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Colonial Office. In these memoranda, he stated that his immediate superior, Colonel C. Bird,⁷⁹ who was married to a local burgher woman, was too closely involved with the burgher elite. According to Ellis, the local system of administration had been 'Hollandize[d] by intermarriage between the colonial officials and the local colonists...'⁸⁰

It was only after 1814, when the Cape officially became a colony of the British Crown, that there was a pointed move towards changing the character of the colony.⁸¹ What did happen relatively soon after the occupation in 1806 was a significant increase in the number of British civil servants. At its peak, the garrison at the Cape numbered 6 407 men.⁸² After 1814, the Cape colony formed part of a large imperial network under British control. In addition, the language policy changed with the institutionalising of English as the official

⁷⁷ Borchers, *Autobiographical Memoir*, 301-302.

⁷⁸ Giliomee, *Die Afrikaners*, 153.

⁷⁹ Colonel Bird served as Colonial Secretary of the Cape.

⁸⁰ Ellis to Goulburn, 1 December 1821, Theal, *Records of the Cape Colony*, volume 14, 183-87.

⁸¹ Freund, 'Cape under the Transitional Governments', 329.

⁸² Freund, 'Cape under the Transitional Governments', 329.

language of the Cape.⁸³ This had a significant effect on the circulation of ideas and people within this imperial world. Because of the expansiveness of the British Empire, early nineteenth-century Cape Town became one of the colonial cities where large numbers of newcomers and visitors could enter. Kirsten McKenzie has written extensively about the interaction between members of colonial cities within the greater British Empire and the ability of these cities to facilitate a 're-invention' of the individual.⁸⁴ The greater colonial network not only held great possibilities for the individual but also resulted in greater economic advantages and opportunities. The process of cultural assimilation of the previously Dutch burgher population can be seen through the example of a certain Mrs van der Bijl. Her personal anglicisation went so far that she, despite her Cape Dutch origins, became completely associated with the English set. She went as far to rename her house, which was previously known as Groote Schuur, 'The Grange', in an attempt to advertise her pro-English proclivities. Her sons attended English schools and her daughters married into the local English gentry. This process of adapting to English society went so far that she pronounced her surname as 'Vanderbile' instead of Van der Bijl.⁸⁵

After 1806, there was once more a large increase in trade at the Cape. Exports rose from a value of 180 000 *rixdollars* in 1807 to 630 000 by 1811, and yet again to 1 320 000 by 1815.⁸⁶ In 1813, the duty on Cape wines imported into England was reduced. This reduction had the effect that Cape wine could, for the first time, compete with European-grown wine in price. The production of wine for export had a significant effect on the amount of wine produced within the colony. In 1775, nearly 3 ¼ million litres were produced. This number grew to more than 5 ½ million litres by 1806, and shot up again significantly in the 1820s because of an increase in popularity of Cape wines in England.⁸⁷ This was mainly due to

⁸³ Wilson, 'The Dutch and the Second British Empire', 374.

⁸⁴ K. McKenzie, *Scandal in the Colonies: Sydney and Cape Town, 1820-1850* (Melbourne University Press, Carlton, 2004).

⁸⁵ G. Viney & P. Brooke Simons (eds.), *The Cape of Good Hope, 1806 to 1872: Aspects of the Life and Times of British Society in and around Cape Town* (Brenthurst Press, Johannesburg, 1994), 56. Of note for this study is that Mrs van der Bijl was related through marriage to some of the most prominent burgher families at the Cape, including the Cloete, the Van Breda and the Melck families.

⁸⁶ Freund, 'Cape under the Transitional Governments', 329.

⁸⁷ R. Ross, 'The Cape of Good Hope and the World Economy, 1652-1835', in H. Giliomee and R. Elphick (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840* (Maskew Millar Longman, Cape Town, 1989), 248.

having British import duties on Cape wines reduced to one-third of the duties that were previously imposed. Exports of wine rose to 1 095 6000 *rixdollars* in 1821 and constituted nearly two-thirds of the value of the colony's total exports.⁸⁸ Other reforms during this period included the abolition of the loan-farm system that had been in existence since the founding of the settlement at the Cape. On 6 August 1813, Governor Cradock issued a proclamation prohibiting the further granting of loan farms, thus ending the loan-farm system.⁸⁹

During the Second British Occupation, efforts were also made to improve agriculture. General Janssens had already begun a process of diversification during the Batavian era by establishing a 'Commission for the Improvement of Stock-breeding and Agriculture.' The committee's main aim was to introduce Spanish or wool-bearing sheep at the Cape.⁹⁰ In 1809, the British government bought and exported a load of wool, which arrived from Swellendam from J.F Reitz and M. Van Breda.⁹¹ Their pioneering work established the bulk of the wool supply for 35 years.⁹² Overall, agricultural production improved as evidenced by the increase in grain production. In 1798, grain production was around 138 000 *muids*; by 1815 it had reached 186 000 *muids*.⁹³

Despite a small number of changes, as with anglicisation, large-scale change to the administration of the Cape did not occur until after 1814 when the Cape was secured as a British Crown Colony. Few administrative reforms occurred before 1814, with the greatest exception being an increase in professionalism in government. This can be seen, for

It is estimated that during the 1820s Cape wine production reached about 160 000 *leggers* per annum, the equivalent of around 96 million litres.

⁸⁸ A. Muller, 'The State and the Development of the Cape, 1795-1820', *South African Journal of Economic History* 1, 1 (1986), 69.

⁸⁹ Freund, 'Cape under the Transitional Governments', 332. The earliest settler land claims were hunting and grazing permits granted by the VOC to free burghers. By the eighteenth century, most of the permits were for grazing land. As time progressed and outlying areas were settled, land usage became more intense. Permanent improvements were introduced, and loan farms became an integral part of the Cape's economy.

⁹⁰ Muller, 'State and the Development of the Cape', 66-67.

⁹¹ Muller, 'State and the Development of the Cape', 68.

⁹² Reitz arrived at the Cape in 1794 and married the daughter of Dirk Gijsbert van Reenen. His family ties helped him to become a prosperous businessman, before moving into farming with his brother-in-law, Van Breda.

⁹³ Freund, 'Cape under the Transitional Governments', 330.

example, in the growth of the number of British officials at the Cape from 1806 onwards. However, the existing official class, because of their knowledge of the local language and administrative structures, remained central components in the administration of the Cape up until at least 1815.⁹⁴ The Burgher Council continued to exist, and remained an elected council of burgher representatives that could levy complaints or requests in the name of the colonial population, although their scope continued to be limited in the same way as it was during the era of the Batavian Republic. In the outlying regions, the administrative system remained relatively unchanged, with many office bearers remaining in the same positions as they had held before the Second British Occupation. Legal change was also slow during this period, although there was some difficulty in handling the different legal forms with different inhabitants of the Cape. The British community at the Cape were subject to British law while the Dutch population remained subject to Roman-Dutch law.⁹⁵ Anglo-Dutch legal pluralism persisted at the Cape well into the 1820s.⁹⁶

When the French annexation of the Netherlands ended in November of 1813, there was some debate regarding the status of former Dutch territories overseas. The Cape of Good Hope and Ceylon were ceded to England in return for British support of Dutch expansion on the European continent. At this time, Lord Charles Henry Somerset was appointed the new governor of the Cape. In spite of his efforts to anglicise the local population and institutions, he was very conservative in his attempts.⁹⁷ As discussed, during the First British Occupation relatively little was done in terms of trying to change government policies at the Cape. The most likely reason was that Britain realised that its occupation of the Cape would be a temporary one, and that long-term societal changes would require much effort for little reward. By the time that the Cape formally became a Crown Colony in 1814, matters such as the implementation of English law and language became pre-eminent.

A greater sense of permanence was fixed upon the formal declaration of the Cape as a British Colony in 1814. After this declaration, changes that were considered more radical were introduced to the administration and public culture of the colony. The British

⁹⁴ Freund, 'Cape under the Transitional Governments', 345.

⁹⁵ Freund, 'Cape under the Transitional Governments', 347.

⁹⁶ Wilson, 'The Dutch and the Second British Empire', 372.

⁹⁷ For more information on Lord Somerset and his reforms, cf. A.K. Millar, *Plantagenet in South Africa: Lord Charles Somerset* (Oxford University Press, Cape Town, 1965), especially part 3.

government intensified its efforts to reform the economy, to anglicise the local population and to settle larger numbers of British subjects within the Cape Colony,⁹⁸ although there still existed a cultural divide between the Cape-Dutch and the British. By 1822, in *State of the Cape of Good Hope*, Bird writes:

‘Company, dancing, and the theatre, are to the taste of all; but the habits of the Dutch and English are not as yet sufficiently amalgamated to allow them to associate and mix in the same free manner as is usual with individuals of common stock. The heads of the society of each nation dine together, very much in the English style; the governor is also liberal in his invitations to both Cape-Dutch and English, and adds much to the hospitality of the place.’⁹⁹

Balls, particularly those held at Government House, were the highlight of the social calendar since the British first occupied the Cape and were an opportunity for the elite of Cape society to socialise. These balls were attended by a wide range of members of society, including politicians, foreign consuls, merchants and senior officials as well as prominent members of the civil society, counting amongst them prominent English families but also members of the Cloete, Van Reenen, Van Breda and Van der Bijl families.¹⁰⁰

One significant way of altering the local population’s culture was intermarriage between the British and the Cape-Dutch. Bird further writes of the marriages between locals and British in the early 1820s:

Only one British lady has as yet honoured a Cape-Dutch gentleman with her hand. From his European and professional education, and the consequence and habits of his family, attached to English manners, customs and society, he can hardly be considered in any other light but that of an Englishman. Very frequent marriages take place between English gentlemen and Cape ladies; but the pleasing and engaging manners of the Cape-Dutch girls, and their vivacity, less forward than that of the

⁹⁸ A. Lester, *Imperial Networks: Creating Identities in Nineteenth-Century South Africa and Britain* (Routledge, London, 2005), 48.

⁹⁹ W. Bird, *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822* (Murray, London, 1823), 164.

¹⁰⁰ Viney & Brooke Simons, *Cape of Good Hope*, 72.

French, but enough so to subdue English coldness, is quite at variance with the obtrusive presumption of the younger part of the other sex...¹⁰¹

Samuel Hudson, writing on marriages much earlier during the First British Occupation states in the same vein that: 'Many of them [burgher women] have Married English Officers and Mercantile Men. This may be one Step towards reforming the conduct of many as the Colony becomes more English.' ¹⁰²

In an effort to make the settlement more homogeneous, Henry Ellis's memoranda triggered the Proclamation issued on 5 July 1822 by Governor Lord Charles Somerset.¹⁰³ He announced that the government would become anglicised over a period of five years. Somerset had been providing bilingual ministers to Dutch Reform Churches and English teachers for schools. By 1822, he believed that there were enough people in these positions to ensure the gradual phasing in of English as the only language of the courts and public offices. The aim was to achieve this by 1 January 1827, although it was only realised in 1828. During the same period, attempts were made to anglicise schools and churches, although this was less successful. The judicial system also underwent a similar process and by 1834, a member of the judiciary could be disqualified if they were not sufficiently fluent in English.¹⁰⁴

By the 1820s, a significant change in the social, administrative and civil structure of the Cape of Good Hope had occurred. The British became more rooted after the declaration of the Cape as a Crown Colony in 1814 and subsequent legislation and changes indicated the more permanent nature of their settlement in southern Africa. This was also reflected in intermarriages between the British and the local population. Although it started in the early years of the annexation amongst the elite (especially during the First British Occupation), this trend trickled down to the lower echelons of society, particularly as the number of British inhabitants of the Cape grew. On the one hand, this intermarriage served as a means of establishing a local network within the wider colonial world, but it also served as a means of cultivating the local population into a culture that was more similar to that of the British.

¹⁰¹ Bird, *State of the Cape*, 170-71.

¹⁰² Shell, 'Samuel Hudson', 53.

¹⁰³ R. Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750-1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999), 55.

¹⁰⁴ Giliomee, *Die Afrikaners*, 157.

CHAPTER 4

Mercantile Gentility: The Case of the Van Reenen Family

The progenitor of the Van Reenen family in South Africa purportedly was Count Jacob von Renen, originally from Memel in East Prussia, which today falls within the boundaries of Russia. He was the son of Daniel von Renen and Catharina Crotki, and came from an important family with notable connections. His brother, also named Daniel, became the mayor of Altenburg in Prussia. According to family recollections, Jacob was forced to flee Prussia after an illegal duel in which his opponent was killed. Jacob moved to the Netherlands and thereafter left for the Cape of Good Hope on 18 October 1721.¹ Although Jacob came from a prominent family, he moved to the Cape in the rank of *adelborst*. He arrived at the Cape on 25 February 1789 on board the *Astrea* and on 5 March 1722, he first set foot on South African soil. Initially, Jacob performed his duties in the rank of *adelborst*, but in 1724, he was promoted to stamp cutter and in the following year, he applied for free-burgher status. In his application, he writes:

To the Honourable Sir Jan de la Fontaine, Master of Government in addition to the Council of Policy. Honourable Sir, from your humble servant Jacob van Renen from Memel who came here in 1721 with the ship *Astrea* as *Adelborst* in the 10th month and has since resided in the Castle and duly served with the Blessing of God is able to serve as citizen and to make a proper living. I humbly beg your blessing to be discharged from Company service in order to become a citizen. Which is done, etc.²

¹ J.D. Van Renen & V. de Kock, *Van Reenen, Van Renen, Vanrenen Family, 1722-1994* (Port Elizabeth Geneological Reseach Group, Port Elizabeth, 1994), 12.

² Van Renen & de Kock, *Van Reenen, Van Renen, Vanrenen Family*, 12. My translation, original Dutch: Aan den Edelatgb. Heer Jan de la Fontaine, Gesaghebber deses Gouvernements, benevens den Edelatgb. Raad van Politie. E. Agt Heer en Heeren, Geeft met verschuldigde eerbied te kennen U Edelatgb. gantsch neederigen dienaar Jacob van Renen van Mymel, hoe hij Supplt. in den jare 1721 met het schip 'Astrea' voor Adelborst d t 10 per maand alhier is aangenomen en seedert dien tijd ten deesen Casteele en (niet beter wetende) naar behooren heft dienst gedaan en de ten aansien den Supplt onder Godes zeegen en vermeynt in staat te weesen op een behoorlijke wijze als burger te sullen kunnen bestaan, soo neemt den selven de vrijheid U edel. Agtb. op het ootmoedigst te smeecken van die goedheid te willen zijn den Supplt. uit Comp's dienst uit te ontslaan en met het burgerschap deeser plaatse te begunstigen. Hetwelk doenen etc.

Shortly afterwards, Jacob was relieved of Company service after which he married Johanna Siekermans, an orphan girl from Amsterdam on 1 July 1725. Slightly less than two months later Jacob applied for the brandy *pacht*, a quarter of which he purchased for the sum of 1 950 *gulden*.³ Only four days after the purchase, however, he ceded his portion of the contract to the well-established alcohol *pachter*, Jan Jacob Stokvliet, most probably for a tidy profit. It is indicative of the family networks Jacob married into that he had either the necessary sponsors or the necessary capital to purchase the *pacht* in the first place. In addition to his involvement in the *pacht* system (both in the alcohol and meat *pachten*), Van Reenen also managed to diversify his business interests. Jacob took an active role in the social life of the Cape and during his lifetime fulfilled various roles that denotes the status he held in the community during this time. He was made a Commissioner for Civil and Matrimonial Matters and became a member of the Orphan Chamber in 1734.⁴

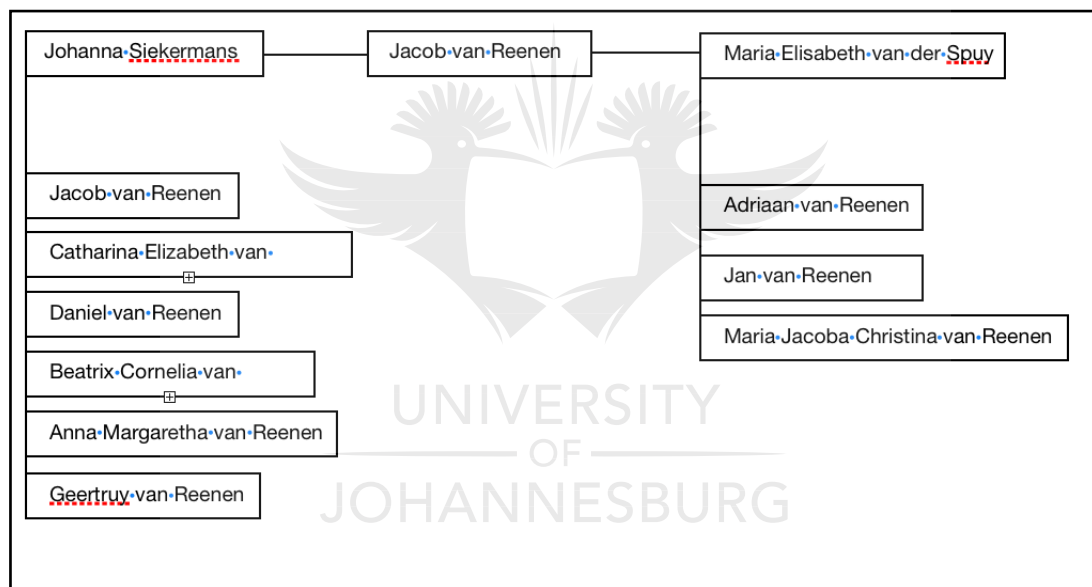


Figure 4.1: The marriages and children of Jacob van Reenen.⁵

Throughout his life, Van Reenen was actively involved in farming, but at times, he also dabbled in trade.⁶ Between 1742-1747 and 1748-1754, Jacob was actively involved in the

³ Van Renen & de Kock, *Van Reenen, Van Renen, Vanrenen Family*, 14.

⁴ G. Wagenaar, 'Johannes Gysbertus van Reenen: Sy Aandeel in die Kaapse Geskiedenis tot 1806' (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Pretoria, 1976), 3.

⁵ Compiled from Van Renen & De Kock, *Van Reenen, Van Renen, Vanrenen Family*.

⁶ K. Schoeman, *Swanesang: Die Einde van die Kompanjiestyd aan die Kaap, 1771-1795* (Protea, Pretoria, 2016), 270.

meat *pacht*. Jacob van Reenen's wife died in 1755, most likely due to the smallpox epidemic at the Cape. During the same time, Jacob van Reenen also lost three of his daughters and their husbands.⁷ Their deaths, however, provide us with an interesting glimpse into the lives of the Van Reenen family. Their marriage produced six living children, the eldest of which was Jacob (de Jonge) van Reenen, who married Maria Franke.

The inventory compiled at the death of Johanna Siekermans indicates that the Van Reenens were a wealthy couple. Besides their own home, they possessed four other houses and stands in Table Valley, a stand with a storehouse and a *reepje lands*, 'a small piece of land' and *een plaats ofte Hofstede gent. 't Good Gelooff gelegen in 't Caabse district aan die Witteboomen*, 'a farm or manor house named Good Gelooff, situated in the Cape District at Witteboomen'. On this farm, where they produced wine, the couple had a total of 19 slaves. Slave were valuable investments and from this inventory, one can conclude that the couple were well off.⁸

Less than a year after the death of his first wife, Jacob married for a second time, this time to Maria Elisabeth Louw. Maria was thirty years younger than Jacob, and the couple had three more children. Children born from this union were:

b7 Adriaan: 4/05/1760

b8 Jan: 7/11/1762

b9 Maria Johanna Christina: 17/06/1764

At the time of Jacob van Reenen's death, Wagenaar estimates that his estate was valued at more than 150 000 *gulden*. The beneficiaries of this estate were his two surviving sons and a surviving daughter. Three of his daughters had died during the smallpox epidemic of 1755 and their children would inherit in their stead.⁹ Jacob van Reenen's children married well: one daughter wed a member of the Van Schoor family and another a member of the burgher council, Jan Serrurier. His son, Daniel, married the daughter of J.Z. Beck but after her early death, he married the widow, Maria Colijn. Van Reenen's sons had thirteen, eight

⁷ Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 270.

⁸ Cape Archives Repository (hereafter CA), Master of the Orphan Chamber (hereafter MOOC) 8/7 Inventories, 1749-1756, no. 48 (per Tanap).

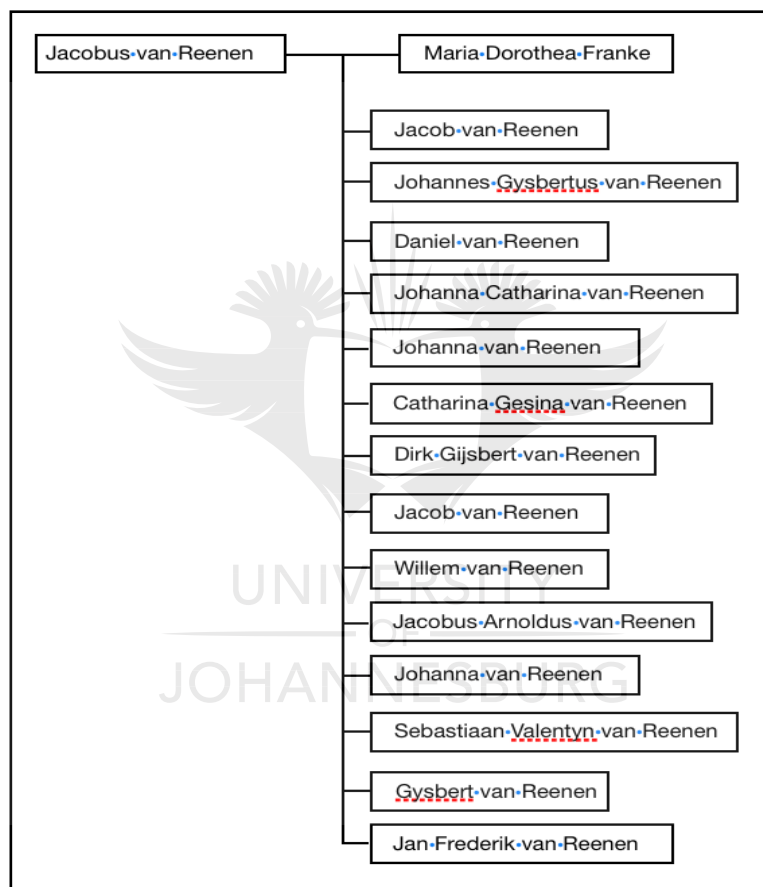
⁹ Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 272.

and eight children respectively, totalling 29 grandchildren.¹⁰ It was his eldest son, however, and the grandchildren born of this son, that would become the most influential figures of this family.

Jacob / Jacobus van Renen (b1)

Jacob van Reenen, the progenitor of the Van Reenen family's eldest son, also named Jacob, was baptised on 11 May 1727.¹¹ At the age of nineteen, Jacob van Reenen the younger married Maria Franke, a woman almost six years his senior. This marriage must have occurred with the blessing of his father, as Jacob had not yet reached the age of consent.

Despite the age difference, the marriage was a success, and Maria bore her sons and four daughters over the course of



her lifetime. The success, and husband ten daughters over her lifetime.

Figure 4.2: The descendants of Jacobus van Reenen and Maria Franke.¹²

Jacobus van Reenen followed the example of his father in respect of his economic activities. On 1 February 1779, even before he was twenty years old, he was awarded one part of the

¹⁰ One of these granddaughters, Catharina Maria van Reenen (daughter of Daniel van Reenen) married Pieter Lourens Cloete, son of Hendrik Cloete and Hester Anna Lourens – central figures in the following chapter on the Cloete family.

¹¹ Hereafter referred to as Jacobus to avoid confusion.

¹² Compiled from Van Renen & de Kock, *Van Reenen, Van Renen, Vanrenen Family*.

meat *pacht* – most likely with the financial backing of his father. For the next 27 years, he was involved in the meat *pacht*, although his name does not appear on the list of contract butchers for the term of 1764. The contract for the subsequent five years was awarded solely to Jan Plaat. Plaat however, was a business associate of Jacobus van Reenen and he continued to partake in supplying meat to the Dutch East India Company during this period.¹³ As Jacobus' family life prospered, his financial and commercial life also enjoyed prosperity. Because of limited economic opportunities at the Cape, it was essential for burghers to diversify their economic activities in order to become truly prosperous. Jacobus managed to do this, and he possessed various farms, both in the areas surrounding the Cape settlement and further inland – most likely to serve as grazing for the large herds of livestock he had to produce. On these farms, he oversaw extensive agriculture and cattle farming. By 1779, he had no fewer than seven loan farms in different areas of the colony, spread widely over the Roggeveld and False Bay. The most famous of the farms in Jacobus' possession was *Welgelegen*, which he purchased in 1756.¹⁴ At the same time, he also purchased the adjoining farms, *De Drie Koppen* and *Altona*.¹⁵ Of his land ownership, Scholz writes of Van Reenen:

Not only did he possess wine and grain farms close to Cape Town but also excellent grazing land in distant areas that he rented or loaned from the Company. One of his sons even successfully established peace with the natives and could live and let his cattle graze in their territory, while other colonists were robbed or murdered. When this son was forced by the governor to leave his farms in this territory, the violence started again.¹⁶

Regarding his social interaction and associated status, Jacobus served in a number of important positions. In 1763, he was appointed Lieutenant of the Second Company Burger

¹³ Wagenaar, 'Johannes Gysbertus van Reenen', 5.

¹⁴ Van Renen & de Kock, *Van Reenen, Van Renen, Vanrenen Family*, 28.

¹⁵ Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 275.

¹⁶ H.J Scholz, 'Die Kaapse Patriotte en Planne vir 'n Oostenrykse Kolonie in Natal', *Historia* 19, 2 (1974), 100-101. My translation, original Afrikaans: nie net enkele wyn- en graanplase naby Kaapstad besit het nie, maar ook uitstekende weivelde in afgeleë gebiede (waartoe nog geen ander koloniste hul vee en volk gestuur het nie) gevind en hulle van die Kompanjie geleen of gehuur. (...) Een van sy seuns het selfs enkele jare tevore daarin geslaag om met die Naturelle vrede te sluit en met vee en volk in hulle gebied te vertoef ofskoon hulle ander koloniste beroof en vermoor het. Toe hierdie seun deur die goewerneur gedwing is om sy plase te verlaat, het hulle opnuut met geweldpleging begin.

Cavalry; in 1767, he was appointed as a member of the Orphan Chamber, and in 1775 as a member of the Burgher Council.

Cape Patriot Movement

This very Van Reenen played a prominent role in the Patriot Movement at the Cape. It was especially the unrest of the late seventies of the eighteenth century that brought Jacobus van Reenen to the forefront. During this unrest, a number of Cape burghers, who were likely influenced by the ideas of Enlightenment philosophers about human rights, freedom of the individual and the right to independence for various groups.¹⁷ These ideas took root, to some extent, at the Cape where the burgher population lived under the authority of the Dutch East India Company, which was increasingly perceived as 'autocratic'. Discontent with the management of the settlement resulted in a deputation of some free burghers to the Netherlands on behalf of the interests of the burgher population living at the Cape. On 7 May 1779 Jacob was one of the deputation sent to the directors of the VOC, *Heren XVII*, and was considered the senior deputy due to his wide knowledge of a variety of administrative concerns, and because of his keen sense of the economic situation at the Cape.¹⁸ The aim of the deputation was to appeal to the *Heren XVII* and to present the burgher's objections to the existing government at the Cape. In addition, during this time, Jacobus developed an idea for an immigration project and the establishment of a colony under Austrian authority on the south-eastern coast of Africa. This idea centred on the 'un-colonised' area in what is currently known as the province of KwaZulu-Natal. From the correspondence of this time, Jacobus van Reenen appears to be an elderly, modest and sincere man with a wide knowledge of economics and trade. At this time, the Dutch trading houses considered him to be worth at least one million guilders.¹⁹ From this ambitious plan, we can conclude that Jacobus was a forward-thinking entrepreneur who capitalised on the benefits he inherited from his father, as well as grasping new opportunities for himself. His idea of an Austrian colony, however, never came to fruition.

¹⁷ Wagenaar, 'Johannes Gysbertus van Reenen', 4. Scholars such as Teun Baartman have disputed the causes for the unrest. T. Baartman, 'Fighting for the Spoils: Cape *Burgerschap* and Faction Disputes in Cape Town in the 1770s' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 2011).

¹⁸ Jacobus was a major landowner during the eighteenth century and had large-scale farming activities on these farms. In addition to owning an estimated 10 000 vines, he was actively involved in the meat *pacht*, which further ensured his economic success.

¹⁹ Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 283.

Jacobus continued the tradition of having a large number of sons who would continue to play a prominent role in Cape colonial society. The interest of Jacobus van Reenen in ensuring the continued prosperity of his children can be seen in the number of ways in which he assisted his sons as they made their way in the world of commerce. Besides the probable loan for the acquisition of the meat *pacht* he made to his son Jacob, Jacobus purchased a wheat farm for his younger son Daniel in 1774. This was done by way of a loan from Jan Serrurier who was brother-in-law to Jacobus, and who served as a member of the Burgher Council. The loan of 12 000 *gulden* is indicative of the massive amounts of money that was exchanged within these tight-knit family networks. Of this, Jacobus writes: To my son, Daniel van Renen, a farm was bought named d'Olievants Vontyn, located beneath the Peerde Bergh, some slave, cattle, goats on debt for his account....²⁰

A total of 10 000 *gulden* was spent to purchase the farm and a remaining 7 000 for the purchase of slaves to work the land. Daniel, however, would die young and leave behind a widow and a young son. Jacobus van Reenen left behind a number of other sons who would play a significant role in the economics of the Cape during their lifetimes. However, the political situation in Europe would soon have far-reaching effects on the lives of those living at the Cape.

Daniel van Reenen (b 3)

Daniel van Reenen, younger brother to Jacob van Reenen of Patriot fame, and the third born son of the progenitor, is part of the second generation of Van Reenens at the Cape. He produced from his first marriage a daughter, Johanna Elisabeth van Reenen, who was baptised in 1765 and in 1783 married J.P. Baumgardt.²¹ Johanna Elisabeth's younger sister Margaretha Hendrina was baptised in 1767 and would marry Donald Campbell in 1785. A third sister, Geetruyda Christina married Fryer Hadfield and retired in Middlesex in England.

²⁰ Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 276. My translation, original Dutch: 'Aan myn soon Daniel van Renen een plaets verkogt d'Olievants Vontyn gelegen onder de Peerde Bergh, eenige slave, beeste, bokke aan dieverende schulde voor syn rekeningh betaald als volgt.'

²¹ J.P. Baumgardt was a prominent official under the British government during the First British Occupation. Shortly after the occupation, the British restructured a number of institutional councils, as well as the collection of revenues and taxes. On 10 October 1795, Baumgardt was appointed the collector of the revenue that was paid yearly by the farmers for permission to cultivate and feed cattle in the lands of the Company. The couples' joint will is in the Cape Archives Repository (hereafter CA), Council of Justice (hereafter CJ) 2677, Notarial and Other Documents: Wills and Codicils, 1783-1784, no 74.

The youngest of these sisters would marry P.L. Cloete, son of Hendrik Cloete of Groot Constantia. These Van Reenen daughters also play an important role in the period after the First British Occupation. At the Cape, J.P. Baumgardt served in a number of prominent positions and by the end of the Company's rule, he was promoted to *koopman titulair*, 'merchant by title'. Within weeks of the British occupation, he was appointed interim judge in the Admiralty Court as a 'gentleman perfectly master of the English language.'²² After this, he was made collector of land revenue. While Mr Baumgardt was making political advances under the new administration, Mrs Baumgardt was actively involved in the new social circles. Of her, Lady Anne Barnard writes:

I had heard not a little of Mrs Baumgardt before I saw her, she has always been reckoned in a literal & figurative sense attached to the Government ever since the taking of the Cape, for with the existing Government she has constantly passed, from Commander in Chief, varying only from Army to Navy, and from Navy to Army. The matter however being entirely between her, her conscience and her Husband and neither of the two last making any objections, I thought it was no business of mine to have any ears for idle reports, indeed I predetermined to listen to nothing – to repeat nothing – to believe nothing.²³

Lady Anne refers often to Mrs Baumgardt in her writings. At a later stage, she reports her own opinion of her:

Mrs. Baumgardt is perfectly of the same opinion. She is a good-humoured, vain creature, and a very good mother to her children, though she certainly does make fish of one and flesh of another. Her husband finds no fault, so 'tis no business of anybody's.²⁴

One wonders if the Baumgardt couple had an accord of some sort. In many ways, Mrs Baumgardt's social and perhaps romantic dealings with the new British administration might have promoted her husband's rise in the new government. In later years, after her husband

²² Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 300.

²³ A.M. Lewin Robinson, M. Lenta & D. Driver (eds.), *The Cape Journals of Lady Anne Barnard, 1799-1798* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1994), 179-180.

²⁴ A.M. Lewin Robinson (ed.), *The Letters of Lady Anne Barnard to Henry Dundas, From the Cape and Elsewhere, 1793-1803, together with her Journal of a Tour into the Interior and Certain Other Letters* (A.A. Balkema, Cape Town, 1973), 213.

had died, Mrs Baumgardt stated that he had left the Cape and moved to England when the Cape was returned to the Batavian government. She writes that he was:

...employed by His Majesty's Government of Demerara until this Settlement again came in the possession of His Majesty; that immediately the capture of the Colony was known in England, the Memorialist's deceased husband returned here (...); That (...) the Memorialist's husband was immediately upon his arrival nominated Receiver of Land Revenue and Inspector of the Forests, which situation he continued to hold until the year 1814, when in consequence of his age, infirmities and (...) of his strong claims upon the British Government, he was allowed to retire, preserving his rank, and with an annual pension of two thousand rixdollars.²⁵

It seems that Mr Baumgardt and his wife's dealings with the new government was the essence of this local collaboration. This idea is further reinforced by the prominent position Mr Baumgardt held by the end of VOC rule, his subsequent involvement in the new administration and, perhaps most tellingly of all, the fact that he defected to Britain during the brief Batavian rule of the Cape. What is perhaps more telling is that Mrs Baumgardt probably shared her husband's political ideals, as she too was more positively inclined towards the British than many of her Van Reenen cousins and relatives. On this point, Lady Anne writes:

Mrs Baumgart meditates living in England & asked me for what her family consisting of 8 children could live in the country & give them a good education, no carriage kept, but a couple of riding Horses... I said 1000 per an: she was sorry it was so much, but said her sister Mrs Campbell had given her the same reply...²⁶

This Mrs Campbell does however give some opposition to the imposition of English supremacy on the Cape Colony. Although one does not know whether it is due to the new administration or simply a piqued character, but Lady Anne writes of her:

...Mrs C[ampbell] after every fair attention on the part of the ladys on board which are five besides herself, she, it seems is resolved to keep apart from all, & far from the acquaintance of any English woman, reserving herself as Genl: Hartley tells me to be the Head of the Dutch party in stead of one of the English & finding much fault

²⁵ Quoted in Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 301.

²⁶ M. Lenta, & B. Le Cordeur, (eds.), *The Cape Diaries of Lady Anne Barnard, 1799-1800* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1999), 47.

with government for sending as she says 'a parcel of people who cannot please the dutch or be likely to adopt their manners' -. Major Bayens tells me that her calculation will not to herself prove a good one, as the dutch [sic] appeared to him, eager to be well with the English, and will not (at present at least) be likely to back her intention of setting up a separate party...²⁷

Seeing as she was the wife of an English Captain, perhaps her attitude towards the new social elite was more out of a desire for precedence than simply a dislike for the British. For at a later stage, Lady Anne writes of her in one of her letters to Henry Dundas:

..in a former letter I mentioned how much they had endeavoured to make themselves disagreeable in their various ways on board of ship; I had really been afraid from what gentl; Hartley said, (and from her own manners) that she woud endeavour to sett up a dutch party agains the English women going out; but I am glad to find that nothing is in her power: she is very much disliked here, even by her own countrywomen, & he equally so, nor woud she be at all on the fore ground of society, was she not tempted (which I will suppose is by a love of receiving notice) to go to rather too great lengths with most of the gentlemen to obtain it...²⁸

It would therefore seem that this dislike for the new administration was not so much an issue of nationality – as Mrs Campbell was married to an Englishman – as it was an issue of social precedence.

Mrs Baumgart's affinity for the English occupants of the Cape was in some ways, whether due to necessity or inclination, shared by her brother Jacob van Reenen. Jacob was born on 20 February 1762 as the eldest child of Daniel van Reenen and his first wife, Catharina Christina Beck. After the death of his mother and the subsequent remarriage of his father to Johanna Levina Colyn, Jacobus ran away from home and joined the crew of a British East Indiaman. Here Jacob was taken under the wing of Captain Smith who intended to make Jacob his heir, as he was childless. He was brought back to England where his aunt, who lived in London, intervened. This aunt was the elder sister of Jacob's mother, and married to Brigadier Fraser of the Dragoons. Jacob was removed from the care of Captain Smith and placed in the care of his aunt. When he was nineteen, his aunt arranged for him to be nominated for a cadetship in the East India Company where he spent the remaining forty-

²⁷ Lewin Robinson, *Letters of Lady Anne Barnard*, 29.

²⁸ Lewin Robinson, *Letters of Lady Anne Barnard*, 50.

seven years of his life in India, save for a period of nine months that he spent at the Cape. Jacob died on a boat on the river Ganges on 28 February 1828. His children changed their surname to Vanreenen and this altered surname was adopted by all his family who subsequently moved to England. His widow sailed to England where she died in 1854. Jacob's five surviving daughters all married English officers in the Bengal army, and all of them either died in India or retired to Britain. He had three surviving sons of which one, John Heyning Vanreenen, took early retirement from the British army and retired to Table Bay. His remaining eighteen years were spent as a brewer, farmer and mining prospector, and in many ways this son continued the Van Reenen legacy. During this time it appears that John Vanreenen was working at Papenboom as brewer (like his eighteenth-century ancestors did), which was at this time operated by Rudolf Cloete, a relative by marriage as his wife was Johanna Charlotta Roberta van Reenen.²⁹

Of Daniel van Reenen's children who survived to adulthood, one daughter married a Cloete, two daughters married English officers, one daughter attached herself to the British administration through various affairs, while his son spent the majority of his life in service of the East India Company and likely became completely anglicised.

Third Generation - The Famous Van Reenen Brothers

Johannes (Jan) Gijsbertus van Reenen (b1c2)

Johannes Gijsbertus van Reenen was the second son of Jacob / Jacobus van Reenen and Maria Dorothea Franke, and therefore a grandson of the progenitor. His father, Jacob van Reenen is the one of the Patriot Movement fame. Johannes Gijsbertus's elder brother, also a Jacob, died young and Johannes Gijsbertus was therefore the eldest surviving Van Reenen brother born to this family unit. Johannes Gijsbertus was one of the Van Reenens who would become the famous Van Reenen brothers, about whom Lady Anne Barnard wrote extensively in her journals, letters and memoirs. He was baptised in 1749, and although there is very little known about his youth, Jan appears in an interesting episode in 1772. At the age of 23, and according to Dutch law not yet of age, Jan became engaged to Catharina Maria le Roux who fell pregnant shortly after their engagement. Jacobus van Reenen challenged his son in front of the Council of Justice in order to prevent the marriage from taking place. In addition, because of his disobedience, Jan was sentenced to fourteen days in jail with only water and bread as sustenance and he had to pay the court fees. The

²⁹ Van Renen & De Kock, *Van Reenen, Van Renen, Vanreenen Family*, 185-88.

marriage did not go ahead and a daughter, born from this courtship did not survive long after birth. Jan would finally marry six years later in 1778 to a daughter of H.C. Maynier, a doctor and Dutch immigrant.³⁰ In 1779 he, along with his younger brother Dirk bid on and won two of the four quarters of the meat *pacht*. Like their father and grandfather before them, they became involved in the lucrative *pacht* system that would play a significant role in establishing the next generation of Van Reenen brothers.³¹

In 1789 he and his brother, Sebastiaan, again assisted their brother Dirk to win the bid for one part of the meat *pacht*, after which they managed to have the additional three parts also awarded to Dirk. Dirk van Reenen, however, did not remain part of this enterprise for long. During the same time Jan, Sebastiaan and a third brother, J. A van Reenen, who owned a butchery, established a company intent on entering the meat industry. Shortly thereafter, a senior VOC official, Egbertus Bergh, became a partner of this company. After once more buying the meat *pacht*, 38 government farms were awarded to the *pachters* in order to raise cattle and sheep. The quick takeover of the meat *pacht* and domination of the entire industry was in essence an economic coup. Wagenaar writes that by mid-1793, the Van Reenen brothers were essentially unassailable in the meat industry.³²

In addition to his considerable involvement in the meat *pacht*, Jan van Reenen was, like the rest of his family, extensively involved in farming.³³ Lichtenstein writes about the interest in equestrian farming of Jan van Reenen (whom he refers to as John):

The most considerable estate in this district is one belonging to Mr. John Van Reenen, the same whom we had seen at the Teefontein. It lies on the north-west side of the Hantam Mountain, the part which is well watered. At the next farm, called the Groote Toorn, Van Reenen has an excellent stud, consisting of more than three hundred,—breeding horses, maresj and colts included,—all of the best English and Arabian breed. He had among others, an Arabian horse, for which he gave three

³⁰ Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 286. Maynier succeeded M.H.O. Woeke as landdrost of Graaff-Reinet.

³¹ The contract appointing Johannes Gijsbertus and Dirk Gijsbertus van Reenen as providers of meat for the VOC indicates that Johannes Gijsbertus at this stage held the position of Burgher Lieutenant, CA, Council of Justice (hereafter CJ) 2912, Notarial and Other Documents: Contracts, 1782, no. 50.

³² Wagenaar, 'Johannes Gysbertus van Reenen', 115.

³³ Interestingly the Van Reenen family were one of the most important, if not *the* most important import family, at the Cape during the 1780s. Their import business centred mainly on the import of agricultural tools, Wagenaar, 'Johannes Gysbertus van Reenen', 137-39.

thousand dollars. These animals are left day and night to run about the open field without any guard. Stables are wholly unknown here, and to steal a horse is a thing unheard of. About once in a fortnight the horses are all collected together and counted over. Now and then a colt is missed, which has probably become a prey to the hyaenas [*sic*], and in many of the horses are to be seen evident marks of the claws of wild beasts.³⁴

Lichtenstein writes further of Van Reenen's farm that although poor in the production of wheat for sale, it seems to have been a magnificent estate owing to the extensive orchards:

This estate of Mr. Van Reenen is an exception to the general rule respecting the unsuitableness of these parts to the growing of corn. As on his side of the Hantam Mountain several little streamlets flow from it, so that the lands can be well watered, he can grow sufficient corn for his own consumption: in a good year the corn will yield from forty to fifty fold. The garden produces excellent kitchen vegetables of many sorts; and an orchard of about six hundred peach trees, furnishes an ample supply of dried fruit for the winter.³⁵

Finally, Lichtenstein refers to Van Reenen's central role in the import and breeding of Spanish sheep at the Cape:

Van Reenen's flock consisted at this time of more than sixteen hundred sheep. As he was one of the first to introduce the Spanish sheep, many of his flock, even as far as the fifth generation, were of that breed, and bore very fine wool; an article which already brought him in great profit. The government in the year 1804 established a commission to enquire into the best mode of improving agriculture and the breeding of cattle, of which Mr. Van Reenen was appointed a member. Of this commission, at the head of which was Mr. Van Ryneveld, I shall have frequent occasion to speak. Their attention has been turned very much to the improvement of the breed of sheep, in which they have succeeded so well, that for a few years past the revenues of the colony have been much benefited by the exportation of wool. Next to Van Reenen's

³⁴ H. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806* (Henley Colburn, London, 1812), 91.

³⁵ Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, 91-92.

estate, that of the Field-Cornet Van Wyk, at which we were now taking up our quarters, is esteemed the best in the district: —it is, however, very deficient in water. To the south-west extends a wide spread plain, about three or four hours in circumference. This plain is bounded by several isolated hills of singular forms, among which the most remarkable is the Prammeberg (the Breast Mountain), so called, because when seen in profile it very much resembles the bosom of a woman.³⁶

Jan also played a significant role in the improvement and breeding of cattle and sheep, to such an extent that he was appointed to a commission to find ways to improve agriculture and animal husbandry in 1804. It is interesting to see that Van Reenen's other agricultural activities were on a large scale as well. Besides his central role in meat provision, Jan van Reenen was also a significant horse breeder and fruit grower. In his personal life, Jan's marriage to Elizabeth Jacoba Maynier was also a success. From this marriage, Jan had three surviving children:

d2 Maria Elizabeth

d3 Hester Aletta

d4 Jacob



The eldest surviving daughter of Jan van Reenen married J.H.W. von Manger, while Hester Aletta van Reenen married Dr Samuel Silverthorne Bailey. He arrived at the Cape in 1813 and set up a private practice in Lang Street as a doctor. He was also the main driver behind the establishment of the Somerset Hospital in 1818. The couple died without issue.

Jan van Reenen's only son, Jacob van Reenen, married Geesje Wilhelmina Cloete. The couple had five children of whom two lived to adulthood and had issue of their own. His son, Jacob van Reenen, married twice, the most significant of which was his first wife, Rykie Catharina Arnoldina Cloete, his cousin on his mother's side. She was the daughter of Johan Gerhard Cloete, the brother of Geesje Wilhelmina Cloete.³⁷

³⁶ Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, 91-92.

³⁷ Van Renen & de Kock, *Van Reenen, Van Renen, Vanrenen Family*, 35-36.

Dirk Gijsbert van Reenen (b1c7)

Dirk Gijsbert van Reenen was the younger brother of Jan van Reenen and a grandson of the Van Reenen family progenitor.³⁸ He was also periodically involved in the meat *pacht*. It was however with the alcohol *pacht* and an advantageous marriage that he was truly to make his fortune. On 28 July 1776, he married Aletta Catharina Hurter who was the daughter of a well-off burgher who had made his fortune in alcohol retail. Of her, the Swedish officer Wallenberg writes in 1770 during his visit: 'The little girl with the big blue eyes, daughter of the rich Mr Hurter and really a beauty of the highest order.'



Figure 4.3: Lady Anne Barnard's portrait of her 'good neighbour', probably Aletta Catharina, the wife of Dirk van Reenen.³⁹

³⁸ As such, Dirk was one of the well-known Van Reenen brothers often mentioned by Lady Anne Barnard in her letters, diaries and memoirs.

³⁹ Image from N. Barker, *Lady Anne Barnard's Watercolours and Sketches: Glimpses of the Cape of Good Hope* (Fernwood Press, Simon's Town, 2009), 54.

In 1785, Dirk van Reenen purchased the farm *De Papenboom* from his father-in-law for the price of 110 000 *gulden*.⁴⁰ *De Papenboom* was also known as the 'Brouwerij bij Nuweland' because of the beer brewery there. In the VOC era, this brewery had the monopoly on producing and supplying beer to the various *taphuisen* in the Cape. Although few of the visitors to the Cape enjoyed Cape beer, complaining of its bad quality, beer consumption was nonetheless insignificant at the Cape. Of this beer, Barrow writes that 'the beer [Van Reenen] makes is so execrable that none drink it but such as cannot afford to purchase European beer'.⁴¹ Thunberg refers to Van Reenen's beer, stating that it was 'never remarkably good, but generates wind in the stomach and soon turns sour'.⁴² After purchasing the farm, Dirk van Reenen had a lavish house designed and constructed which Lady Anne Barnard referred to as one of the most beautiful houses in the Cape. She writes of this house as being 'certainly...the most gentlemanlike place in this colony, so cultivated – improved & the high oak Heges [*sic*] which on each side forms the avenue or approach might not discredit an old English nobleman's' seat.⁴³ During the First British Occupation, Van Reenen's monopoly on the brewing of beer ended. In an official report, of 1798 John Barrow writes:

the licence to retail Cape beer was a monopoly in the hands of 1 person who alone had the privilege of brewing; it was abolished soon after the capture of the place and at present every person is at liberty to brew...⁴⁴



⁴⁰ Shortly after this purchase, Dirk and his wife Aletta drew up a will in which Dirk named his father and mother as his beneficiaries in the event that he should die without living issue, CA, CJ 2674, Notarial and Other Documents: Wills and Codicils, 1777-1778, no. 25.

⁴¹ J. Barrow, *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa* (Cadell and Davies, London, 1806), volume 2, 314.

⁴² M. Boucher & N. Penn (eds.), *Britain at the Cape, 1795 to 1803* (Brenthurst Press, Johannesburg, 1992), 167.

⁴³ Lenta & Le Cordeur, *Cape Diaries of Lady Anne Barnard*, 78.

⁴⁴ Excerpt from an official report by John Barrow for George Macartney, Cape Town, 1798, Boucher & Penn, *Britain at the Cape*, 136.



Figure 4.4: The home of Dirk Gijsbert van Reenen at *Papenboom*.⁴⁵ The structure on the right was likely the brewery. Van Reenen was a friend and neighbour of the Barnards when they lived at *Paradise*.⁴⁶ Louis Michel Thibault designed the house. In Lady Anne's opinion, it was the only Cape house 'which had the air of a European mansion, and this having been erected by his own slaves from an Italian drawing...'⁴⁷

In addition to the brewery, Dirk van Reenen was also in possession of a number of other properties and loan farms.⁴⁸ The following farms were registered to him:

⁴⁵ Image from Barker, *Lady Anne Barnard's Watercolours and Sketches*, 52.

⁴⁶ An appeal by D.G. van Reenen to make use of a road falling on the property of Mr Cloete gives us some indication of how geographically close their properties were. They led an interconnected life and the effects thereof can be seen in the number of marriages between members of these families. CA, Colonial Office (hereafter CO) 3878, Memorials Received, 1810, no. 385.

⁴⁷ Lewin Robinson, Lenta & Driver, *Cape Journals of Lady Anne Barnard*, 265.

⁴⁸ D.G. van Reenen experienced some conflict after the Second British Occupation regarding property ownership, claiming that certain pieces of land had been granted to him under the Batavian Government that was not being recognised by the British Government. The transitional character of this period must have had far-reaching effects on individuals such as Van Reenen who had to go through a complicated process of appeals in order to ensure that his property rights were recognised, CA, Papers Received from the Secretary of State, London (hereafter GH) 1/4, Dispatches, 1809, no. 105: 'A representation from D.G. van Reenen relative to a piece of land granted to him by the Batavian Government' and CA, CO 3871, Memorials Received, 1809, no. 28 part 1.

Het Rode Klygat (Swartland)

De Twee Kuilen (Swartland)

Vogelsang (Swartland)

Strandfontein (Valsbaai)

Poespasvallei (Swellendam District)

Kleinefontein (Swellendam District)

Vondeling (Swellendam District)

Kudysvallei (Swellendam District)

Meerlust (Nuweland)

Nieuwlandsfontein (Nuweland)

Mauritskraal (Gamtoosrivier)

Het Kleine Kasteel (On top of Table Mountain)⁴⁹

On these farms, Dirk focussed mainly on the breeding of horses, Dutch cattle and Spanish sheep. He and his brothers were the first to import Spanish wool sheep and interbreeding them with the native sheep of the Cape. Barrow also writes of the farming enterprises of Dirk van Reenen as being

scattered like ant-heaps throughout the length of the kolonie [*sic*]. From the Cape to Gamtoos, from the Zwartland to the south-west, his properties dotted the map, exceeding by far 100 000 acres in extent. In the Overberg he held besides Poespas Vallei, Kleinfontein and the title-deeds of Rhenoster Fontein, Cadys Vallei and Vondeling, combining a block of 15 000 acres at the Breede River mouth. This was his main farming concern: here he left no stone unturned, nor shrub unobserved in his own restricted sphere, here were concentrated his Dutch cattle, his Arab horses...⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Van Renen & De Kock, *Van Reenen, Van Renen, Vanrenen Family*, 37.

⁵⁰ Schoeman, *Swanesang*, 291.

Of the Van Reenen brothers' extensive interest in farming activities, Lady Anne Barnard reported, after visiting the farm Ganzekraal, that the Van Reenen family deserve recognition for their role in improving agriculture and cattle farming:

As an instance of Mr. Jacob Van Reenen's attention to these things, and of his ardour in the pursuit of them, it may be mentioned, that he this year has cultivated two hundred and forty acres of land - on which he has bestowed sixteen hundred loads of manure. He told us, moreover, that he could insure excellent crops by only manuring his lands every three years. One of his fields, husbanded in this way, had already produced him crops for twenty-four years successively.⁵¹

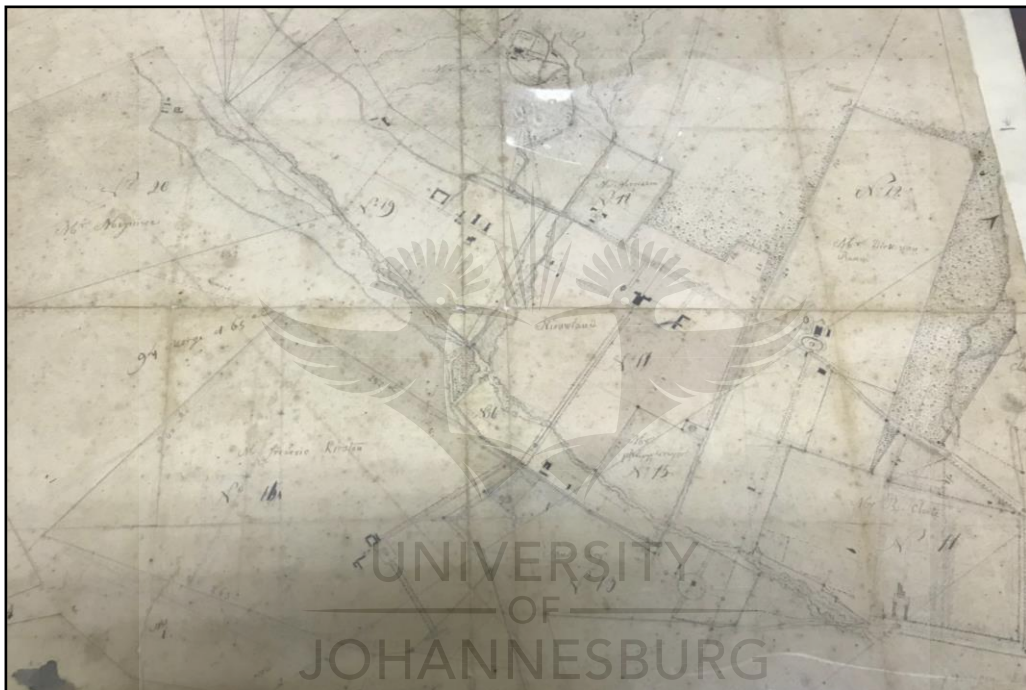


Figure 4.5: Map surveying the properties of Dirk van Reenen, Dreyer, Frederick Kirsten, Mr. Morrison, Mr Breda and others. Section 12 on the right is noted as being the property of Dirk Gijsbert van Reenen while Section 11 is noted as belonging to Mr Cloete, as well as the unnumbered section on the right of the image. This proximity allowed for much interaction between the families, but it also led to disputes between the Van Reenens and Cloetes.⁵²

Children of Dirk Gijsbert van Reenen

The surviving children of Dirk Gijsbert van Reenen married into some of the most prominent burgher families of the time. His son, Jacob Jan Willem van Reenen, and his daughter, Catarina Gesina, both married into the Van Breda family. Two other daughters married into

⁵¹ Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, 25.

⁵² CA, Miscellaneous Documents (hereafter M) 1/239, Survey Map, 1811.

the Horak and Reitz families, respectively, while his son Daniel married the daughter of his second wife, Johanna Catharina Deneys. Daniel's daughter, Cornelia Magdalena married Pieter Gerhard Cloete and two other daughters married Englishmen.⁵³

By the time that Britain conquered the Cape of Good Hope in 1795, Dirk Van Reenen and his brothers formed part of the economic and social elite. British imperialism had at its heart the search for local collaborators in order to simplify the transitional process.⁵⁴ While we do know that the British had no long-term intentions with the Cape at the time of their first occupation, they did manage to make significant changes to the internal workings of the Cape, something that Dirk van Reenen in particular was to experience. As noted in the previous chapter, with the demise of VOC control at the Cape, the new administration moved to implement free trade and abolished the meat and alcohol monopolies. Dirk van Reenen died on 28 October 1828 and, in the words of the Orphan Chamber, he died so insolvent. For a man who had risen to the height of social and economic success barely twenty years before, he died indebted with his total outstanding debt amounting to 60 000 rixdollars.⁵⁵

Jacob van Reenen (c8) 1755 - 1806

Jacob was the fourth son of Jacob van Reenen and Maria Franke, and a grandson of the Van Reenen progenitor. He is another one of the Van Reenen brothers who dominated the *pacht* system. Jacob travelled with his father to Europe in 1772 when he was sixteen years old, and the three-year period he spent there exposed him to a number of different experiences from those of the average Cape burgher. In 1781, Jacob married Maria Catharina Persoon⁵⁶ and the couple produced three sons and five daughters. On his return to the Cape, Jacob entered, as his brothers did, the entrepreneurial sphere and, according to Lady Anne Barnard, he said of himself:

I had some genius for Speculation and I struck out a plan which had it been permitted to go on unchecked would have enriched me, but the great Men in power here grew

⁵³ Van Renen & De Kock, *Van Reenen, Van Renen, Vanrenen Family*, 78 – 79.

⁵⁴ W. Dooling, 'The Making of a Colonial Elite: Property, Family and Landed Stability in the Cape Colony, c 1750-1834', *Journal of South African Studies* 31, 1 (2005), 151.

⁵⁵ C.J. Beyers (ed.), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek*, Deel 5 (Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1987), 819.

⁵⁶ Sister of Christiaan Hendrik Persoon, who was born at the Cape in 1761 and became famous later in the eighteenth century as the founder of mycology as a field of study.

jealous of me, they wish'd to share the advantages with me, and I saw no reason why I was to give them away...they entagled me with law suits...I grew sick of my plan, I was not certain that my life was not in danger.⁵⁷

It is somewhat unclear whether Jacob van Reenen is referring to the British authorities here. What we do know is that Jacob was Captain of the Burger Infantry in 1795 during the invasion of the Cape, and that he was at the head of a patrol that skirmished with British forces on 3 August. In March 1796, Jacob moved from Kruysriver to Slangriver, close to the current district of Heidelberg in the southern Cape. The reason for this move far to the interior, may be related to the fact that Jacob van Reenen did not swear the oath of allegiance along with his brothers. Henry Lichtenstein reports:

Our second day of rest at the Klavervalley was devoted by the Commissary general to visiting another government station called the Groote-post, by which means we saw a different part of the Groenekloof. In the afternoon we were visited by Mr. Jacob Van Reenen and other colonists of the neighbourhood. The former gave me many very interesting details respecting his travels in Caffraria, and evinced a knowledge of the natural history and geography of the country which is seldom to be found among the inhabitants of southern Africa. In his youth he had been in Europe, and had travelled through France and Holland: his wife is sister to our celebrated Mr. Persoon.⁵⁸

Children of Jacob van Reenen

Jacob had eight children who survived to adulthood and had descendants of their own:

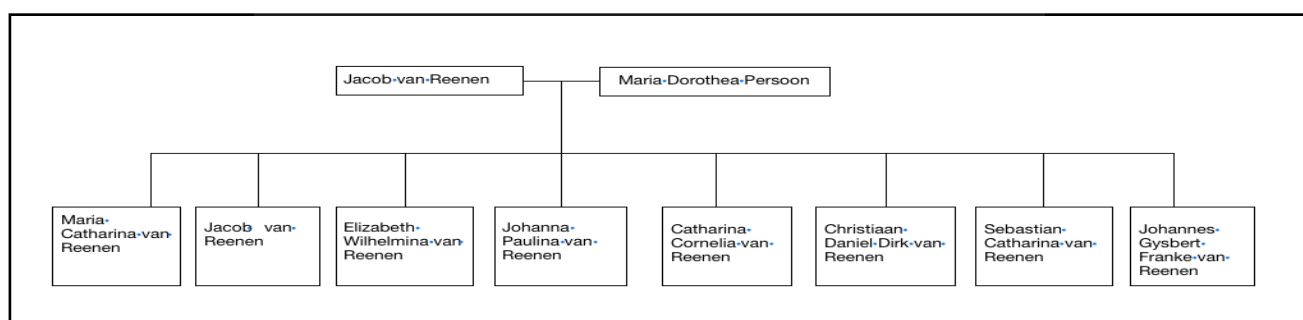


Figure 4.6: Diagram indicating the descendants of Jacob van Reenen and Maria Persoon.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ Lewin Robinson, Lenta & Driver, *Cape Journals of Lady Anne Barnard*, 355.

⁵⁸ Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, 26.

⁵⁹ Based on Van Renen & De Kock, *Van Reenen, Van Renen, Vanrenen Family*

Particularly significant of Jacob van Reenen's children and grandchildren are their various marriages, many of which were to their Cloete and other relations. The eldest son of Maria Catharina van Reenen (daughter of Jacob van Reenen) and her husband Ferdinand Versfeld, Jacob Versfeld, married Aletta Jacoba Cloete, daughter of Hendrik Cloete and Anna Gesiena Borchers. Their second son, Jan Willem Jansen Versfeld married Maria Catharina Barbara van Reenen, his second cousin. Their eldest daughter, Maria Catharina Elizabeth Versfeld married Phillipus Albertus Cloete. These marriages all took place during the Second British Occupation of the Cape. By this time, intermarriage between the prominent families of the original Dutch population of the Cape had become common and was well entrenched in society. This intermarriage could be attributed to a number of factors, ranging from one as simple as geographical propinquity to trying to establish some network of security in a society that was greatly influenced by fluctuating social dynamics and political shifts.

During the First Occupation, Dirk van Reenen played an active role in the defence of the Cape as Captain of the Burgher Cavalry.⁶⁰ In 1797, a call was made to those inhabitants in the vicinity of Cape Town to swear an oath of allegiance to the British Crown. The Resolutions of the Council of Policy state:

28 May – according to the notes by the Council of Policy the heads of families and many other inhabitants of Cape Town and those within four hours' distance from the Castle had to make an oath of allegiance on Thursday and Friday the 15th and 16th of June.

The oath states: 'I do swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to his Majesty George the Third by the grace of God, King of Great Britain, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith &c. &c &c.'

1. J.A. (Jan) van Reenen
2. W van Reenen
3. Fk van Reenen
4. Gysbt van Reenen

⁶⁰ Van Renen & De Kock, *Van Reenen, Van Renen, Vanrenen Family*, 38.

5. D.G. van Rheenen

6. S.V. van Reenen⁶¹

Those who did not take the oath (and who lived closer than four hours by horse) were considered disloyal subjects and 'no longer had the protection of the British government'. They were ordered to depart the colony within 30 days. Ships would be prepared for them to transport them to Java or elsewhere (wherever the British sought to land them). Six of the Van Reenen brothers swore the oath of allegiance, while the remaining brothers were probably not within the prerequisite four hours' travel distance.⁶²

It appears as if in the search for stability across the period of 1780 to 1820, a number of the Van Reenen family members intermarried with the new English elite, who entered the Cape colony during this period. This did not, necessarily, guarantee economic safety, as can be seen in the case of Dirk Gijsbert van Reenen. Some members of the prominent Van Reenen family decided not to collaborate with the British and focused their attention on strengthening their local social and family ties, while other members embarked on what can only be called a program of ingratiation with the new establishment. The sheer number of marriages between the established Cloete and Van Reenen families suggests in some sense a search for stability and control in a period of intense political and social turmoil. On the other hand, many members of the very same family collaborated with the new elite in spectacular and intimate ways. The Van Reenen family provide striking examples of individual human agency in an attempt to survive the economic and social changes that are intrinsically part of the political changes that occurred at the Cape of Good Hope between about 1795 and 1815. One should not simply assume that these marriages between the old and the new elite were in any way one-sided and only advantageous to the existing Dutch elite. It also appears that many British migrants actively married into the existing networks of commerce to their own advantage. Ross points out that several of the most successful British merchants that established themselves at the Cape during the Second British Occupation married into existing mercantile families – the Van Reenen family in particular. Hamilton Ross, J.B Ebdon and all three of the partners in the firm of Barry and Nephews all married

⁶¹ G.M. Theal (ed.), *Records of the Cape Colony, 1793-1831: Copied for the Cape Government, from the Manuscript Documents in the Public Record Office* (Forgotten Books Publishers, London, 2012), volume 1, 88-89.

⁶² Dirk van Reenen had moved about 250-300 kilometres away from Cape Town, which would be beyond what a horse could travel in four hours (approximately 200 kilometres).

Van Reenen women.⁶³ As such, the Van Reenens provide a good case study of the many ways in which business and political interests intertwined with larger political changes.



⁶³ R. Ross, 'The Cape of Good Hope and the World Economy, 1652-1835', in R. Elphick and H. Giliomee (eds.), *The Shaping of South African Society, 1652-1840* (2nd edition, Maskew Miller Longman, Cape Town, 1989), 265-66.

CHAPTER 5

From VOC Supporters to British Collaborators: The Case of the Cloete Family

Jacob Cloete, the progenitor of the Cloete family in South Africa, arrived at the Cape of Good Hope as part of the initial fleet that travelled with Jan van Riebeeck. He is recorded as one of the seventeen Company servants who became free burghers on 10 August 1657 in order to produce crops for the refreshment station. One of the immediate objectives of the VOC was to ensure a constant supply of food for the garrison and calling ships at the Cape without the added expense of paying wages for labourers. For this purpose, Jacob received a farm on the Liesbeek River that would only be taxed after a period of twelve years.¹

Jacob's wife, Fytje (Sophia) Radergoertgens arrived at the Cape with her brother, Pieter Radergoertgens and their two children, Gerrit (Gottfried) and Elsje (Adelheid) on 16 March 1659. She had been married to Jacob Cloete in 1650 in Oedt in what is now Germany. By 1662, two more children had been born to the couple, a girl, named Catryn (also referred to as Catharina in some sources) and a boy named Coenradus. Fytje's life at the Cape of Good Hope was not a long one, as three years later, on 28 May 1665 the new Commander of the Cape, Zacharias Wagenaar, commits the following to his Journal: 'In the afternoon we heard from our chief surgeon that shortly before, the wife of the agriculturist Jacob Cloeten had died in the Lord. In her the poor man and his four little children have lost much.'²

Earlier that same year, we have a description of the Cloete home at their farm on the Liesbeek, which was originally the southern portion of the farm later known as 'Ecklenburg', by Wouter Schouten when writing about his visit to the Cape of Good Hope.

I still remember how once the 3 of us wanderers had gone inland on a certain occasion, and were suddenly overtaken by dusk when we found ourselves near the most distant of the farm-houses, right behind the Table Mountain. Because of the wild beasts we did not dare to go back in the dark of night so long a way as we had come in our wanderings; so we resolved to beg the poor farmer for shelter (but for good payment) and set our course for the solitary farm-house. On coming there we

¹ D.W. Krüger & C.J. Beyers (eds.), *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Volume 3 (Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town, 1977), 161. Also see K. Schoeman, *'n Duitser aan die Kaap, 1724-1765: Die Lewe en Loopbaan van Hendrik Schoeman* (Protea, Pretoria, 2004), 236.

² H.C.V. Leibbrandt, *Precis of the Archives of the Cape of Good Hope: Journal, 1662-1670* (Government Printers, Cape Town, 1901), 147.

were amicably greeted by the half-naked pregnant wife (from Cologne by birth), since her man was out, and invited into the little glassless house, and brought into the best room, which in this cold night was airy and chilly enough since there was no glass nor any shutters there. And there, when the man [Jacob Cloete] came home we ate a truly frugal evening meal, the best the folk could provide. Then (at our request) they made our bed or sleeping-place in the cowshed, where our diligent hostess threw some straw on the floor, and to make all as fine as might be spread over it a little piece of sailcloth.³

The description of Jacob's wife as pregnant at this time might suggest that she died in childbirth or due to complications from her pregnancy. In addition, the comforts of their small home left much to be desired, and could well in itself have contributed to the death of Jacob Cloete's wife. It would have been a difficult task for the 35-year old Jacob to raise four young children while he was struggling to make ends meet, and with few options for improving the existing situation of the family, Jacob must have felt the loss of his wife even more acutely. One option was marriage in order to lessen the demand on his household. In 1658, the entire adult female population of the colonial establishment at the Cape was twelve. Of these, five were of European extraction and all were all married. Ten years later the situation was not much better and it is reasonable to assume that a girl of marriageable age was sought-after. Jacob's easiest option was simply to let his daughter marry in order to lessen the financial strain on his own household. In 1668, when Elsje, Jacob's eldest daughter was only thirteen years old, Jacob negotiated her marriage to Willem Schalksz van der Merwe.⁴ The couple were married on 9 September 1668 and on 2 November 1670, when Elsje was only fifteen years old, the couple baptised their first child, a girl named Sophia. They ended up having thirteen children, contributing to the legacy of many Van der Merwe descendants.

In 1669, Jacob's twelve-year free-burgher contract expired but he still had to work off his original employment contract. Therefore, he requested permission to return to the

³ R. Raven-Hart, *Cape Good Hope, 1652-1702: The First Fifty Years of Dutch Colonisation as Seen by Callers* (2 volumes, A.A. Balkema, Cape Town, 1971), volume 1, 82-83.

⁴ Willem Schalksz van der Merwe arrived at the Cape of Good Hope in 1661. Initially he worked for Hendrik Boom, who was in charge of establishing the Company Gardens. In the same year, he became a free burgher but returned in 1663 to the employ of the Company. He married the young Elsje Cloete in 1668, D. Robertson, 'Willem Schalks van der Merwe', First Fifty Years Project: <http://www.e-family.co.za/ffy/g5/p5321.htm> Last accessed: 11 October 2017.

Netherlands on 4 February 1671. This permission was duly granted in the Resolutions of the Council of Policy.

The burghers, Jacob Cloethen of Keulen and Jacques Braekij van Bergen in Henegouw, because of the expiration of their respective time, and because of the liberty given by the Company to free individuals, are given permission to sail with the return fleet to the Fatherland. They no longer need to stay as long as payments are made for transport and such costs as necessary at the time.⁵

A fleet of eleven ships left the Cape for Europe on 26 February 1671 and another fleet of five in March 1671. It is likely that Jacob left the Cape in one of these two fleets, leaving his four children, two of whom were still very young, at the Cape. His elder son, Gerrit Cloete, had joined the household of Gerrit Pieterse van der Bijl and Fijtje van der Tempell as *knecht* (servant). Gerrit probably married his wife, Catharina Harmanz before 1675, for in that year their eldest child, Jacobus Cloete, was born. After the repatriation of Jacob Cloete to the Netherlands in 1671, the younger children, Catryn and Coenraad, eleven and eight respectively, were left in the care of Wouter Cornelis Mostert⁶ and Herman Ernst Gresnicht.

Jacob returned to the Cape while still in the service of the VOC to find his children grown. Perhaps he had not returned earlier because of the cost involved in travelling from Europe to the Cape. In his absence, his daughter Catryn had married Jan van Brien en while his youngest child, Coenraad, would go on to marry Martha Verschuur. Once more at the Cape, he was appointed second-in-command at the Klapmuts *buitepost* (service station) where

⁵ Cape Archives Repository (hereafter CA), Council of Policy (hereafter C), 7, Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 10-20 (per Tanap). My translation, original Dutch: Wijders bij eenige van de landbouwers alhier, naementlijck Jacob Cloethen van Keulen en Jacques Braekenij van Bergen in Henegouw, den Raad verthoont zijnde, dat deselve, vermits expiratie van hun[n]e respectiven tijden, die bij d' E. Compe. voor de vrijluijden allomme in India wonende, gestipuleert zijn, alsnu genegen waeren met dese retourvloot wederom nae 't vaederland te keren ende dierhalven daertoe consent versoghten: Soo is aan deselve, om dat tot geen lange[r] verblijff zijn te disponeren geweest, zulx toegestaen, mits betaelende alhier sodanigen cost ende transport gelt als daertoe is gestelt

⁶ Wouter Mostert was born circa 1635 in Utrecht and married Hester Weijers on 14 July 1658 at the Cape of Good Hope. By 1677, his wife was noted as *overleden* ('deceased') in the resolutions. Wouter was one of the VOC soldiers who became free burghers in 1657, and was granted land to farm next to the Liesbeek River, D. Robertson, 'Wouter Mostert', First Fifty Years Project: <http://www.e-family.co.za/ffy/g7/p7858.htm> Last accessed: 15 January 2020.

the people under his command totalled seven soldiers and a number of slaves.⁷ In 1685, Jacob and two other soldiers were taken into custody due to repeated offences, including thievery. The three conspirators killed Company livestock and sold the meat and sometimes even illicitly removed grain from Company stores and transported it to the houses of the farmers in the area. For this, they were sentenced to be put in chains, branded and sent to Robben Island for 25 years of hard labour. However, because the Company could not afford to lose three experienced employees, these men were sent back to Klapmuts to continue their work without pay.⁸ Jacob's freedom was not to last long, for on 23 May 1693 an entry in the Journal of the Cape Governor, Simon Van der Stel, reads as follows:

This evening, between the hours of 8 and 9, was murdered, not far from the Castle near the butchery, Jacob Cloeten, corporal in the service of the Hon. Company, the oldest of the Comp's servants, having helped to lay the foundation of this colony, having been the first Freeman, though having later returned to the service of the Company....he was found, badly mistreated with three blows to the head and two stab wounds to the chest, all five mortal, over and above 25 lesser wounds, he was found lying in his blood with his sword at his side still in its scabbard, so that the attack must have been treacherous, as he was still very agile and as fit as a 25-year old young man.[...]⁹

So died the Cloete progenitor in southern Africa, leaving behind a legacy of governmental service that would continue to be a trademark of the Cloete family for the next two centuries. Jacob's murderers were apprehended in 1696 and identified as follows in the Resolutions of the Council of Policy:

The Honorable Governor demonstrated to the members of the meeting, the murderers Christiaan Hols van Brinck, Jan Hendrick Schoonheck van Galen, Jan Casperssen van Hassel, all soldiers in service of the Company who committed at different times the murders of the free burghers Claas Plomp, Jacobus Jansz, a

⁷ K. Schoeman, *'n Duitser aan die Kaap, 1724-1765: Die Lewe en Loopbaan van Hendrik Schoeman* (Protea, Pretoria, 2004), 237.

⁸ Schoeman, *Duitser aan die Kaap*, 238.

⁹ J. Hoge, 'Personalities of the Germans at the Cape, 1652-1806', *Archives Yearbook for South African History* (1946), 61.

soldier, and the Hottentot Captain Brasman and, likewise, the corporal Jacob Cloeten...¹⁰

Inheritance through the female line

Jacobus Cloete was the grandson of the progenitor of the Cloete family in South Africa and the son of Coenraad Cloete and Martha Verschuur. Jacobus married his cousin Sibilla Laubscher on 19 July 1722.¹¹ Sibilla was the daughter of Sophia (Fytje) van der Merwe and her first husband, Roelof Pasman. Roelof was originally from Germany and received the farm Rustenberg. Roelof died around 1695 and Fytje was left widowed, inheriting 400 sheep, 20 oxen, two slaves and 5 000 vines.¹² Fytje did not remain widowed for long, as on 1 January 1696 she married Pieter Robberts, a VOC employee from Germany. Around 1705 Robberts suffered a stroke and he died sometime between 1712 and 1713.

After Robberts' death, Fytje continued to farm at Rustenberg. By 1720, her property totalled 600 sheep, 30 horses, 12 000 vines and 24 slaves. Besides the farm she had inherited from her husband, she also inherited the farms Hottentots Holland and Onverwacht from her daughter Margaretha.¹³ Later she also purchased the farm Nooitgedacht, which she transferred to her son-in-laws. From the number of farms in her possession, and the amount of vines and slaves she owned, it is clear that Fytje was an economic driving force. This trait she passed on to her daughter Sibilla.

Sibilla Pasman (Laubscher) was first married in 1714 to Jan Albertus Laubscher. In the same year, her mother, Sophia van der Merwe, bought the farm Nooitgedacht.¹⁴ Five years later,

¹⁰ CA, C 22, Resolusies van die Politieke Raad, 78-80 (per Tanap). My translation, original Dutch: De Edle. Heer Gouverneur ter vergaderinge gedemonstreert hebbende hoe dat diverse gecontumaseerdens ende ter dood gevonnisde moordenaers, als namentlijck Christiaan Hols van Brinck, Jan Hendrick Schoonheck van Garlen, Jan Caspersen van Hassel, alle soldaten in dienst der E.Compe. over haerluijder particuliere moorden op diverse tijden aan de persoonen van den vrijborger Claas Plomp, Jacobus Jansz soldt., en den Hottentotscapiteijn Brasman begaan, van gelijken ook die persoon off persoonen die den corporaal, Jacob cloeten...

¹¹ D. Robertson, 'Sibilla Pasman', First Fifty Years Project: <http://www.e-family.co.za/ffy/g8/p8507.htm> Last accessed: 23 January 2020.

¹² G. Viney & A. Proust, *Colonial Houses of South Africa* (Struik-Winchester, Cape Town, 1989), 82.

¹³ Margaretha and her husband, Claas Elbertz, died in the smallpox epidemic of 1713.

¹⁴ Sophia van der Merwe was the daughter of Elsje van der Merwe (née Cloete), the eldest daughter of the progenitor Jacob Cloete. Sibilla and her second husband, Jacobus Cloete, were therefore first cousins.

her mother transferred the farm to Sibilla's first husband but his ownership of the farm was short lived as he died in 1722. Sibilla had four children by her first husband and so continued the Laubscher family dynasty. After the death of her first husband, Sibilla inherited the farm Nooitgedacht and another farm, Fortuijn, in Hottentots Holland. Sibilla also inherited 310 sheep and seven slaves, along with the farms and other items from her first husband.¹⁵ Sibilla's second marriage was to her first cousin, Jacobus Cloete.¹⁶ Jacobus and Sibilla had three children born from their marriage. The eldest, Jacobus Coenraad Cloete (b4c2d1) died without issue. His sister, Sophia Cloete, married Petrus Machiel Eksteen, the son of the wealthy Hendrik Oostwald Eksteen.¹⁷ Sibilla's second husband died in 1757 but she lived for another twenty years. During her life, she inherited the farm Nooitgedacht that she transferred to her son Hendrik Cloete in 1761.¹⁸ This is interesting as it indicates some transference of wealth to the next generation through inheritance that has greatly benefitted from beneficial marriages. Both Fytje and Sibilla's lives are excellent examples of the transfer of wealth through the female line and the role that women played in establishing these family dynasties.



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¹⁵ CA, Master of the Orphan Chamber (hereafter MOOC) 8/4, Inventories, 1720-1727, no. 5 (per Tanap).

¹⁶ By the time of this marriage, a trend had developed between members of the extend Cloete of marrying close cousins. These types of marriages were beneficial for concentrating inheritance and helped to consolidate landed property. In the Cloete family, in particular, we see significant intermarriage with the van der Merwe family who were closely related through the marriage of Elsje Cloete to Willem Schalkz van der Merwe, as discussed above. Their daughter, Sophia van der Merwe was married twice, first to Pieter Robbertz who had no issue, and secondly to Roelof Pasman. When Pasman died in 1695, his estate included a farm and homestead in Stellenbosch, 600 sheep and 50 heads of cattle. His estate inventory indicates that they were relatively well off for people this early in the development of the Cape, CA, MOOC 8/1, Inventories, 1673-1705, no. 15 (per Tanap).

¹⁷ Hendrik Oostwald Eksteen became the wealthiest member of Cape society by the middle decades of the eighteenth century, and a marriage into this prestigious family would have been a good match for Sophia Cloete, G. Groenewald, 'An Early Modern Entrepreneur: Hendrik Oostwald Eksteen and the Creation of Wealth in Dutch Colonial Cape Town, 1702-1741', *Kronos: Southern African Histories* 35 (2009), 12.

¹⁸ M. Hall, 'The Architecture of Patriarchy: Houses, Women and Slaves in the Eighteenth-Century South African Countryside', *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers* 79 (1995), 64.

Hendrik Cloete (b4c2d2) – Owner of Groot Constantia

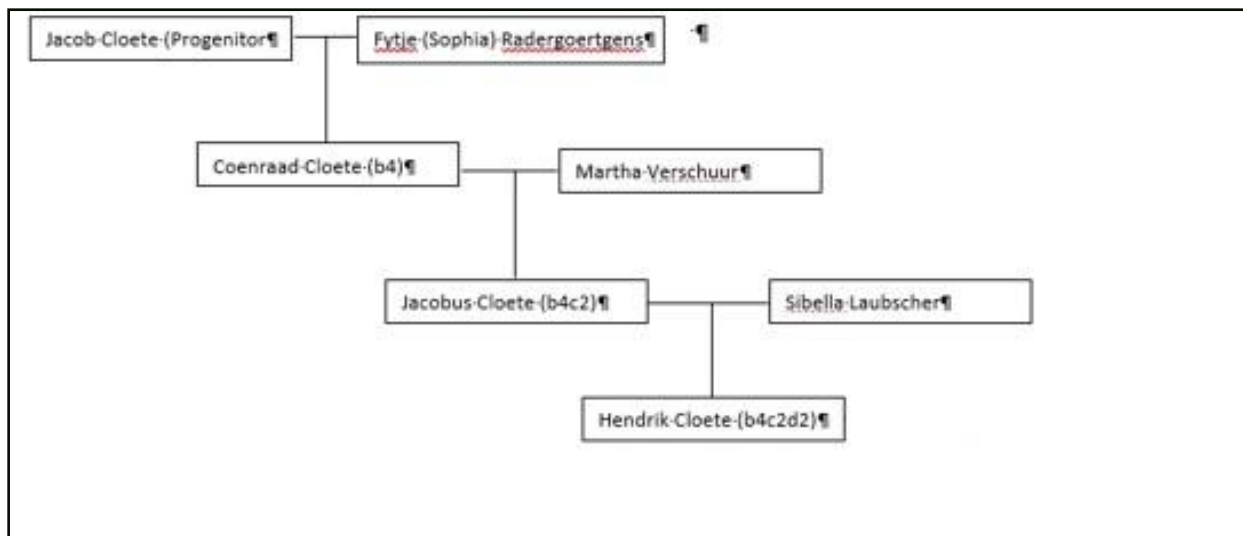


Figure 5.1: Progenitor and first three generations of the Cloete family in South Africa.

Hendrik Cloete, the owner of the famous Groot Constantia farm was the great-grandson of the progenitor of the Cloete family in South Africa. His grandfather, Coenraad Cloete was the youngest son and child of the progenitor. Coenraad married Martha Verschuur on 26 July 1693.¹⁹ Three sons were born from this union:

Coenraad Cloete

Hendrik Cloete

Jacobus Cloete

The youngest of these sons, Jacobus Cloete, married Sibilla Laubscher on 19 July 1722.

¹⁹ D. Robertson, 'Coenraedt Cloeten', First Fifty Years Project: <http://www.e-family.co.za/ffy/g7/p7769.htm>
Last accessed: 15 January 2020.



Figure 5.2: Portrait of Sibilla Laubscher, mother of Hendrik Cloete, as can be seen at Groot Constantia.

Hendrik Cloete was born in 1725 and was 53 years old when he purchased the Groot Constantia estate. By this stage, the majority of his many children were still minors and most were probably still living at home. After this purchase, the farm remained in the family for four generations.²⁰

²⁰ Y. Brink, 'The Material World of Hendrik Cloete's Groot Constantia', Vernacular Architecture Society of South Africa: Workshop II, Studies and Debates in Vernacular Architecture in the Western Cape (Durbanville, 2004). Unpublished paper.



Figure 5.3: Portrait of Hester Anna (Lourens) Cloete, wife of Hendrik Cloete of Groot Constantia.²¹

Hendrik Cloete was already a member of the social elite of the Cape by the time he purchased Groot Constantia. In the VOC Cape, position in society was often reflected by membership of certain bodies or councils. Hendrik served as *heemraad* of his district. The position of *heemraad* came into existence because of the expansion of local government at the Cape. Members of the *heemraad* served along with the Board of the landdrost as a court with jurisdiction on certain civil and criminal cases. This board also had a municipal function and could impose taxes. It also played a role in the defence of the district that they served. Membership to this board consisted of the *landdrost* (magistrate), assisted by members of the *heemraad*. These members were recommended by the Council of Policy

²¹ Hester Anna Lourens, wife of Hendrik Cloete, also came from a prominent family. Her father, Pieter Lourens (sometimes spelt Lorenz), served as the *landdrost* of Stellenbosch, S. Newton King, 'Sodomy, Race and Respectability in Stellenbosch and Drakenstein, 1689-1762: The Story of a Family, Loosely Defined', *Kronos: Southern African Histories* 33 (2007), 6.

and nominated by the governor of the Cape. This meant that Hendrik Cloete served in one of the highest political positions available to individuals who were not in the employ of the VOC.²² In addition to this honour, Hendrik also served as the Captain of the Burgher Cavalry of the district of Stellenbosch.²³ His position in public office suggests that he was in favour with the VOC establishment, since the governor had to approve appointments to *heemraden*. His influence, and affluence, seems to have increased over the course of his lifetime as in 1778 he was able to purchase the famous Groot Constantia

Constantia was established in 1685 when Commissioner Hendrik Adriaan van Rhee de gifted the farm to Simon van der Stel. Eventually the farm was subdivided into three: Groot Constantia, Klein Constantia and Bergvliet. By 1753, Carl George Wieser was the owner of Groot Constantia but sold it to Jan Serrurier in 1778. In the same year, Johann Serrurier²⁴ sold the farm to Hendrik Cloete.²⁵ Along with the farm, Cloete also gained the responsibility of supplying the *Heeren XVII* with Constantia wine on a yearly basis, an agreement that had been in existence since 1726. In November 1785, the *Heeren XVII* complained that they had not received enough Constantia wine to meet their demands, and stated that wine dealers from Sweden and Denmark were buying Constantia wine and selling it in Europe, to the detriment of the Company. In 1788, they suggested that the percentage of the profits that the owners of both Groot Constantia and Klein Constantia received after the Company sold the wine, be increased from 15% to 25% but on condition that no private exportation of Constantia wine should take place.²⁶

This suggestion of the *Heeren XVII* was unacceptable to the owners of both Groot Constantia and Klein Constantia. In a memorandum, Hendrik Cloete stated that he knew of no obligation to supply the Company with wine and if there were any obligation of this sort,

²² Liebenberg, H., 'Introduction to the Resolutions of the Council of Policy of Cape of Good Hope', 36.

Towards a New Age of Partnership Project (Tanap):

http://www.tanap.net/content/activities/documents/resolutions_Cape_of_Good_Hope/introduction_english/01.htm Last accessed: 17 October 2020.

²³ CA, Council of Justice (hereafter CJ) 2895, Notarial and Other Documents: Contracts, 1758, no. 45.

²⁴ Johann Serrurier was married twice. His second marriage was to Geertuij van Reenen, daughter of Jacob van Reenen and Johanna Siekermans, D. Robertson, 'Johann Serrurier', First Fifty Years Project: <http://www.e-family.co.za/ffy/g15/p15020.htm> Last accessed: 22 July 2019.

²⁵ G.J. Jooste, 'Die Geskiedenis van Wynbou en Wynhandel in die Kaapkolonie, 1753-1795' (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Stellenbosch, 1973), 132.

²⁶ Jooste, 'Geskiedenis van Wynbou', 141.

it ought to have been stated in the title deed of Groot Constantia, which it was not. In addition, none of the previous owners of the farm had communicated any such obligation to him either.²⁷

In a letter of 15 January 1779, he writes to his relative in the Netherlands, Hendrik Swellengrebel Junior:

Although I am now the owner of Constantia, I shall not be able to send even a half-aum²⁸ of wine to my friends in Europe, as the Directors have forbidden the export of all Cape wines, but especially Constantia wines. It is hard not to be able to oblige old friends with one's own produce; but your Hon. knows me well enough to know that I would not wish to do so as a matter of trade, nor bilk the Company of its just privileges. As far as possible I shall try to further the interests of the Company. You are well aware of my behaviour in respect of farming. I shall always do my duty by the Company.

But, honourable Sir, could you not put in a good word for me to be allowed to export 7 or 8 half-aums of wine to Europe every year – red and white in equal quantities – on payment of all transport and other costs incurred by the Company. It would be understood that I shall export my wines only after my commitments to the Company have been satisfied. I would not be able to send this quantity every year, yet I might manage to send over such a quantity to please my good friends. However, I would not risk doing so without express permission. Let me stress again that I am not activated by self-interest or love of gain.²⁹

Cloete also requested the right to sell to private individuals, and on this basis agreed to continue to provide a fixed supply to the Company. This Swellengrebel was the son of Hendrik Swellengrebel Senior, who served as governor of the Cape between 1739 and 1751 after which he retired to the Netherlands. Hendrik Junior was not as involved in Company affairs, but he did make himself available to be appointed as governor of the Cape in 1783.³⁰ Thanks to his family background and connections, Swellengrebel had some influence

²⁷ Jooste, 'Geschiedenis van Wynbou', 142.

²⁸ An *aam* or 'aum' was approximately 150 litres.

²⁹ G.J. Schutte (ed.), *Briewewisseling van Hendrik Swellengrebel Jr. oor Kaapse Sake, 1778-1792* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1982), 307.

³⁰ Schutte, *Briewewisseling van Hendrik Swellengrebel*, 9.

among the higher-ranking employees of the Company and it was for this reason that Cloete was complaining about the sale of Constantia wine to his friend.



Figure 5.4: Hendrik Cloete, around 1788. The circumscription reads: 'It is your tobacco I am smoking with such enjoyment at the card table.' Anonymous pencil sketch, 33 x 21 cm, Swellengrebel Collection.

Interestingly enough, although Hendrik Cloete came into conflict with the VOC government because of the trade in Constantia wine, and despite the close family ties with the Van Reenen family, Hendrik did not share the ideals of the Patriot Movement. He called those individuals involved in the Patriot Movement: *niet de vermaamste colonisten, maar lieden van minder soort*.³¹ Later on, he claimed that:

My family and I have always spoken against the Cape patriots, in such a way, that we certainly would not dare come in their company, for this reason we also avoided auctions for years.³²

While Hendrik Cloete had no desire to associate with the Patriot Movement, he did share some of their grievances, such as delivering produce at fixed rates and the regulation of trade. Yet, it appears that Hendrik remained steadfastly loyal to the VOC despite a general

³¹ H. Giliomee, *Die Afrikaners: 'n Biografie* (Tafelberg, Cape Town, 2013), 29. Translation: 'Not the most important colonists but people of a lesser type.'

³² My translation, original Dutch: 'doen ik en my famielie de Caapse patriotte altoos zoodanig teegen sprak, wy niet zeeker in hun gezelschap meer dorste coomen, ja jaaren en dagen de buyten venduties ook daarom hebbe moete mejde', K. Schoeman (ed.), *Die Bosmans van Drakenstein, 1705-1842: Persoonlike Dokumente van die Familie Bosman van Drakenstein, 1705-1842* (Protea, Pretoria, 2010), 78.

push for more burgher rights by the late 1770s and early 1780s. Perhaps Hendrik Cloete did not share the eagerness to change the current establishment. His financial and social position was secure within the existing government, his friendships were well established with members of the VOC elite, and he would have had very little to gain from a change in government. In fact, change would bring on greater liberties and open the market up for competition to his own wine production – a scenario that did in fact happen when the British occupied the Cape, resulting in serious financial implications. In truth, Cloete had no reason to subscribe to the revolutionary ideas of the Patriot Movement because he had nothing to gain from it.

Constantia Wine

During the first few decades of Company rule, the cultivation of wine was mainly done by the VOC itself but after the ousting of Willem Adriaan van der Stel from the position of governor and the subsequent ending of private farming of Company employees, viticulture became one of the chief economic enterprises of the free-burgher population. By 1750, there was an estimated 4 million vines in the Cape, with the majority of the wine being sold at the Cape to local consumers.³³ This amount of vines increased steadily over the next few decades, reaching seven million vines by 1773 and more than ten million by 1791.³⁴ In terms of the wines produced at Constantia, it is important to note that there were two farms with this name: Groot Constantia and Klein Constantia (also known as De Hoop op Constantia). The wines produced on these farms were known both locally and internationally for their high quality, with Klein Constantia producing a lesser-known white wine and Groot-Constantia producing the better-known red wine. Red Constantia wine was made from the muscatel grape, originally from Shiraz in Persia and was known for its sweet taste. This wine was so widely renowned that Jane Austen refers to it in her novel, *Sense and Sensibility*, where the character Mrs Jennings recommends Constantia wine for a disappointed heart:

I have just recollected that I have some of the finest old Constantia wine in the house that was ever tasted; so I have brought a glass of it for your sister. My poor husband!

³³ Jooste, 'Geskiedenis van Wynbou', 7.

³⁴ Jooste, 'Geskiedenis van Wynbou', 15-16.

How fond he was of it! Whenever he had a touch of old cholicky [*sic*] gout, he said it did him more good than anything else in the world. Do take it to your sister.³⁵

Sense and Sensibility was published in 1811, but the first draft of the novel had already been completed in 1795. This would make the writing of the novel contemporaneous with the First British Occupation of the Cape. Apart from *Sense and Sensibility*, Charles Dickens' last and unfinished novel, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* mentioned Constantia wine as being served to Reverend Septimus by his mother:

As, whenever the Reverend Septimus fell a-musing, his good mother took it to be an infallible sign that he 'wanted support' the blooming old lady made all haste to the dining-room closet, to produce from it the support embodied in a glass of Constantia and home-made biscuit.³⁶

The novel remained unfinished upon Dickens' death in 1870, but clearly Constantia wine had caught the imagination of some of the most talented writers of the nineteenth century.



Figure 5.5: A sketch by Lady Anne Barnard of the Groot Constantia estate. Hendrik Cloete Jnr invited Lady Anne and her husband to taste his wines.³⁷

³⁵ Elinor and Mrs Jennings, shortly after Marianne's disappointment with Willoughby, J. Austen, *Sense and Sensibility* (Chancellor Press, London, 2002), 148.

³⁶ C. Dickens, *The Mystery of Edwin Drood* (Chapman & Hall, London, 1870), 67.

³⁷ N. Barker (ed.), *Lady Anne Barnard's Watercolours and Sketches: Glimpses of the Cape of Good Hope* (Fernwood Press, Simon's Town, 2009), 57.

Sons of Hendrik Cloete Snr³⁸

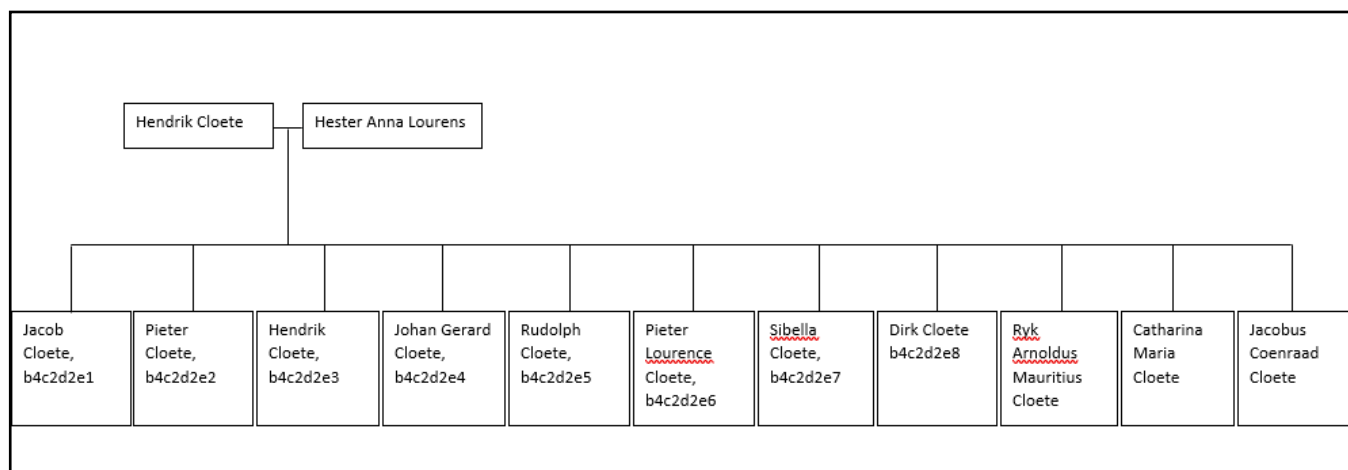


Figure 5.6: The children of Hendrik Cloete Senior and his wife, Hester Anna Lourens.

Hendrik Cloete Jnr (b4c2d2e3)

Henrik Cloete Snr remained at Groot Constantia until the death of his wife in 1794, after which he moved to live with his son, Pieter Lourens, at Zandvliet. His first two sons had died young and without issue and so, his third son, also called Hendrik, remained at Constantia to continue the Cloete legacy. In the will of Hendrik Cloete Snr, dated 1782, he bequeathed the prestigious Constantia and its cellars to his son Hendrik Cloete Jnr.³⁹ Hendrik Cloete Snr expressly stipulated in his will that Hendrik Jnr would inherit the farm on condition that he would never sell it.⁴⁰ In her *Journals*, Lady Anne Barnard refers to Hendrik Cloete Jnr as ‘Mynheer Cloete, of Constantia, one of the most opulent men in the colony...’⁴¹ Although Hendrik Cloete was one of the most prominent burghers in the colony, very little was written about him by contemporaries. Lichtenstein only states:

³⁸ Not all of Hendrik Cloete’s sons thrived in the changing political climate of the Cape after 1795. The Cape Archives provide testimony to the effects of the instability of the period. A younger son, Dirk Cloete for example was declared insolvent in 1804, CA, Master of the Supreme Court, Insolvency Branch (hereafter MOIC) 2/10, Insolvent and Distribution Accounts, 1804, no. 90.

³⁹ CA, CJ 2676, Notarial and Other Documents: Wills and Codicils, 1781-1782, no. 46.

⁴⁰ ‘onder expresse conditie dat voorsz hofsteede nooit door hun voorsz zoon sal mogen werden verkocht’, CA, CJ 2676, Notarial and Other Documents: Wills and Codicils, 1781-1782, no. 46.

⁴¹ A.M. Lewin Robinson, M. Lenta & D. Driver (eds.), *The Cape Journals of Lady Anne Barnard, 1799-1798* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1994), 266.

[he] is among the richest private persons in the colony. He had a hundred and eight slaves in his service here, a greater number than was ever possessed by any other individual. From this circumstance alone, some idea may be formed of the extent and quality of the property.⁴²

Another anecdotal reference to him does provide some insight into the huge wealth of the proprietors of Groot Constantia, as evidenced in the journals of Lady Anne:

The largest piece of petrification that has ever come out of the cavern [Drup Kelder] is in the possession of Mr. Cloete at Constantia. One day in the cave he said to some people that were there along with him, 'That is so fine a specimen that I would give a thousand dollars to have it at Constantia.' A boer asked him if he was serious, - he replied, he was – he did not believe any one could bring it safe over the Kloof. The boer effected it, and landed it entire at Mynheers door, much to his sorrow.⁴³

Hendrik was obliged to pay the 1 000 rixdollars for the petrified stone. Yet, if one considers the number of slaves that Hendrik possessed, it would have been completely within his means to do so. At a time when slaves were considered capital investments, the sheer number that Hendrik owned is an indication of his considerable wealth. Although this third son inherited the most famous of the Cloete farms, his brothers also had substantial financial standing.⁴⁴

Johan Gerhard Cloete (b4c2d2e4)

Hendrik Cloete Snr's son, Johan Gerhard Cloete, inherited the family farm, Nooitgedagt. Lichtenstein refers to him in passing when he raves about the extent of the Groot Constantia:

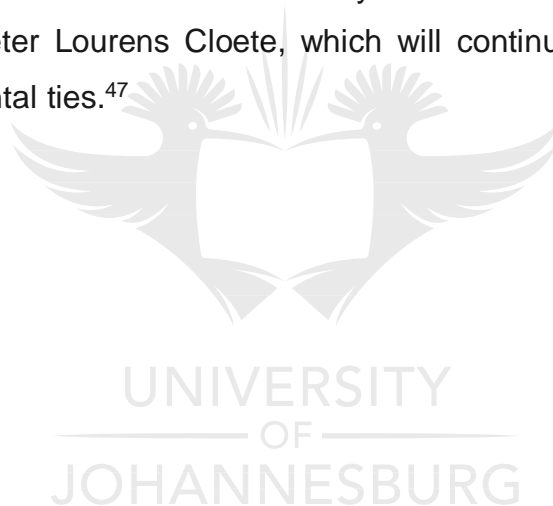
⁴² H. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806* (Henley Colburn, London, 1812), 100.

⁴³ A.M. Lewin Robinson (ed.), *The Letters of Lady Anne Barnard to Henry Dundas, From the Cape and Elsewhere, 1793-1803, together with her Journal of a Tour into the Interior and Certain Other Letters* (A.A. Balkema, Cape Town, 1973), 116.

⁴⁴ Hendrik Cloete Jnr's daughter, Gesina Wilhelmina Cloete, married the only son of J.G. van Reenen, Jacob van Reenen, on 4 May 1805, further cementing the close family ties between the Cloete and Van Reenen families, G. Wagenaar, 'Johannes Gysbertus van Reenen: Sy Aandeel in die Kaapse Geskiedenis tot 1806' (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Pretoria, 1976).

‘Still farther, we pass near the estate called Nooitgedagt, whose former owner, J. G. Cloete, a brother of the proprietor of Constantia.’⁴⁵

Although Lichtenstein does not dwell on the identity of this son of Henrik Cloete, he is as important a figure of the period as were his father and his brothers. Johan Gerhard Cloete played a significant (if not very effective) role in the defence of the Cape in August 1795 when British forces landed at Muizenberg. The British attack on Muizenberg commenced on 7 August with troops and two battalions of seamen marching from Simon’s Town, while four warships and a small gunboat sailed to Muizenberg.⁴⁶ 150 *Pandours* (militiamen of colour) under Captain Cloete’s command evacuated to their mountain post. After the battle, Cloete became indisposed. Lieutenant H. Abue was appointed acting commander in his stead on 11 September. Sources do not indicate what caused Cloete’s indisposition, although one can speculate that he had some foresight in knowing that any attempt to block British advances would be unsuccessful. His story ends without issue and it is the fate of his younger brother, Pieter Lourens Cloete, which will continue the story of the Cloete family’s close governmental ties.⁴⁷



⁴⁵ Lichtenstein *Travels in Southern Africa*, 100.

⁴⁶ T. Potgieter and A. Grundlingh, ‘Admiral Elphinstone and the Conquest and Defence of the Cape of Good Hope, 1795-1796’, *Scientia Militaria: South African Journal of Military Studies* 35, 2 (2007), 49.

⁴⁷ Interestingly, although Johan Gerhard Cloete had no legitimate issue, he was involved in a scandal in 1784 when, at the age of 24, he was called before the church council of Stellenbosch and accused of fathering a child on Elizabeth Smalberger. Hendrik Cloete directed a memorial to the governor asking him to order the church council of Stellenbosch to ‘abandon their ... inquisitorial researches, summons and interrogatories...’, *Nederduits-Gereformeerde Kerk Archives, Stellenbosch* (hereafter NGKA), G 2 1/3: Resolutions of the Church Council, Stellenbosch, 11 January and 23 February 1784.

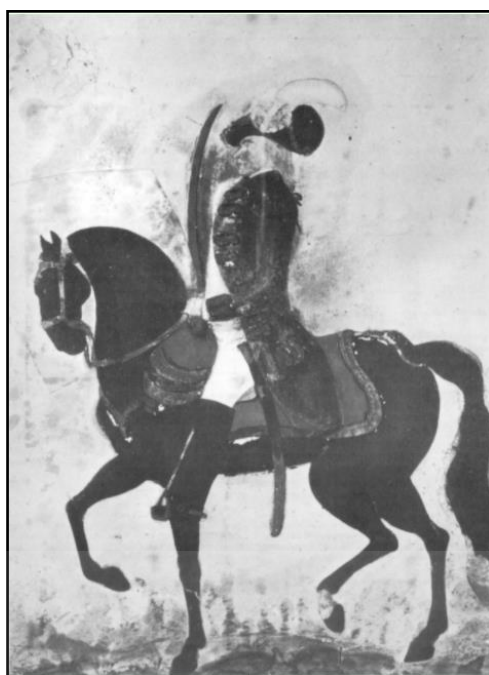


Figure 5.7: Captain Johan Gerhard Cloete, Commander of the *Pandour* Corps at the Battle of Muizenberg.⁴⁸

Pieter Lourens Cloete (b4c2d2e6)

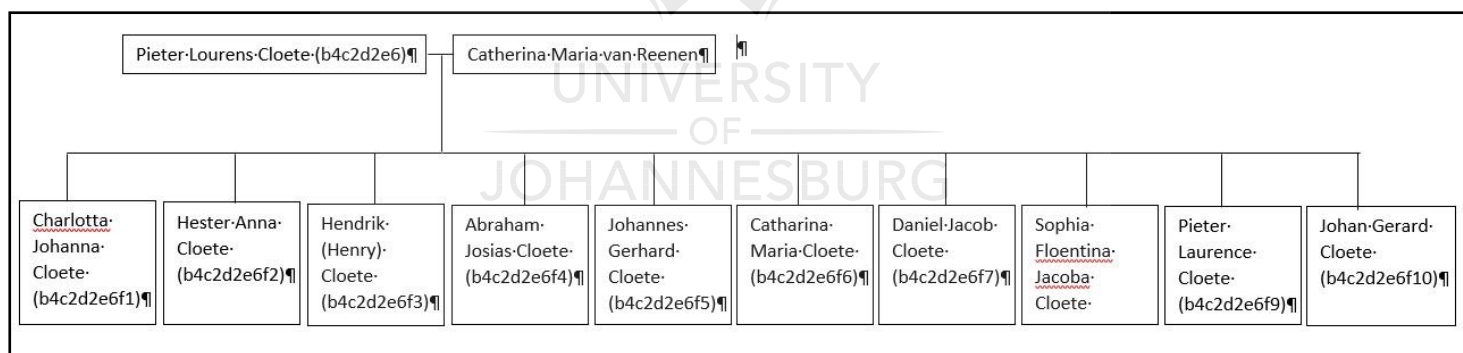


Figure 5.8: The children of Pieter Lourens Cloete.

Pieter Lourens was born in Stellenbosch in 1764 as the sixth son of Hendrik Cloete and Hester Anna Lourens. His eldest two brothers died young and his elder brother, Hendrik Cloete inherited the prized Groot Constantia farm. Pieter Lourens was initially educated at home and assisted his father with his extensive farming activities. In 1781, he started working as a clerk for the VOC and six years later started acting as a wine merchant. This may also be because his father had acquired the farm Groot Constantia ten years before,

⁴⁸ J. de Villiers, 'The Pandour Corps at the Cape during the rule of the Dutch East India Company', *Military History Journal* 3, 3 (1975).

and Pieter Lourens was therefore in a unique position of selling the most sought-after Cape wine. His social prominence also continued to rise. In 1793, he was appointed vice-chair of the Orphan Chamber, an office he held for the next ten years until 1803.⁴⁹ In 1795, following the First British Occupation, Pieter Lourens was named a member of the Burgher Senate. It appears that he had good relations in government – both under British and Batavian rule. Pieter Lourens took a keen interest in civic affairs and in 1807, his meeting and subsequent friendship with Charles Grant (later Lord Glenelg) made him extremely popular with the British authorities.

In 1787, he married Catharina Maria van Reenen, further establishing the Cloete family's close connections with the prominent mercantile Van Reenen family. Catharina Maria van Reenen was the daughter of Daniel van Reenen, the younger brother of Jacob van Reenen, who was discussed in the previous chapter. Her sister was therefore the Mrs Baumgardt that Lady Anne Barnard frequently referred to, while two other sisters also married into the new British elite that entered the Cape during the First British Occupation. These family connections seem to be a precursor to a continual process of anglicisation. This couple's children would achieve prominence under British rule at the Cape. Pieter Lourens became almost completely anglicised over the course of his life.⁵⁰ To this end, he sent his sons overseas to receive a better education. These sons will be considered in further detail later.

Of Pieter Lourens's four daughters, three survived into adulthood. The eldest, Charlotta Johanna, first married Lt. Colonel Ronald Campbell of Scotland. After his death in 1814, she married for a second time, this time to Sir Henry Rivers. Charlotta had children from both marriages. Charlotta's three children by Campbell were born in Scotland – seemingly indicating that she had relocated with her first husband to his homeland. According to the diaries of Lady Anne, Charlotta returned to the Cape with her husband on the same ship as the Barnards. As discussed above (in chapter 3), despite Charlotta's marriages, Lady Anne's comments seem to indicate that Charlotta was not necessarily in support of the British occupation of the Cape.

Charlotta's younger sister, Sophia Floentina Jacoba, married Evelyn Meadows Gordon of the Bengal Army on 25 April 1829. Sophia's children, too, would become completely

⁴⁹ As discussed earlier, his younger brother, Dirk Cloete, did not fare well under Batavian rule since in 1804 his assets were liquidated to pay his debtors.

⁵⁰ C.J. Beyers (ed.), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek*, Deel 5 (Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1987), 135-36.

anglicised. In Aston parish in the United Kingdom, the following tenor was added to the peal of the Church at Christmas in 1889 by Major Peter Lawrence Gordon, son of Sophia Floentina Jacoba: 'in memory of Sophia Gordon, Evelyn Meadows Gordon and Sir James Davidson Gordon K.C.S.I. some time private secretary to the Lord Lawrence and judicial Commissioner of Mysore and Goorg, d. 1889.'⁵¹ Sophia's second son made this dedication to the memory of his parents and brother. A daughter, Jose Elizabeth, was also born to the Gordon couple and died in the same parish in 1916.

Of the two remaining daughters, one died young and without issue and the other married first Joseph Lusson, and secondly Pieter Gerhard Brink, but likewise died without issue.

Sons of Pieter Lourens Cloete

Hendrik (Henry) Cloete

Pieter Lourens's sons also continued the tradition of marrying into English-speaking or anglicised families. Hendrik (Henry) Cloete was born on 26 June 1792 in Rondebosch, and was the eldest of Pieter Lourens' six sons. At the age of ten, Henry and his younger brother Josias were sent to Holland in April 1803 in order to receive better schooling than could be provided at the Cape. The timing of this journey is extremely significant, as the Cape of Good Hope had just been restored to Batavian rule, while the choice of a Dutch education seems telling as to the family's plans for future administrative influence. Henry was educated for five years in Groningen and at the private academies of Naarden and Beverwijk, before entering as a law student at the University of Utrecht. He completed the last year his study at the University of Leiden before he travelled to London where he entered Lincoln's Inn and studied further under Sir Samuel Troller. From there he sailed for the Cape in December of 1812, arriving in June 1813.⁵²

In 1816, Henrik (Henry) married Christina Helen Graham who was sister to Colonel John Graham. From this marriage, sixteen children were born, twelve of whom survived childhood.

⁵¹ 'Aston', Genealogy in Hertfordshire: http://www.hertfordshire-genealogy.co.uk/data/places/places-a/aston/_aston.htm Last accessed: 24 September 2017.

⁵² W.J. de Kock (ed.), *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Volume 1 (National Council for Social Research, Cape Town, 1968), 171-72; G. Schutte, 'What Was Pieter Cloete Doing in Utrecht?', *Quarterly Bulletin of the National Library of South Africa* 62, 1 (2008), 36-43.

During the First British Occupation, there was always the assumption that the occupation of the Cape would be a temporary measure. It is clear that during the First British Occupation anglicisation did not take place on a huge scale. In fact, Barrow writes of this time:

Few of the male inhabitants associate with the English, except such as hold employments under the government. This backwardness may be owing in part to the different habits of the two nations and partly, perhaps, to the reluctance that a people must feel in mixing with their conquerors.⁵³

The Second British Occupation was however much more permanent in its nature and it is within this social and political climate that Henry Cloete came to the forefront. He had been educated in both the Netherlands and in England, and was surely one of the most qualified members of the local judiciary. A number of influential families, the Cloetes amongst them, started to anglicise after the Second British Occupation and increasingly associated more with the British government than with the burghers of the Cape.⁵⁴ By 1831, Henry Cloete could declare, 'The Cape Dutch are essentially English. Their habits, their intermarriage, their general improvements, all exhibit and prove this fact.'⁵⁵ This quote provides some insight into the feelings of his contemporaries and those of similar socio-economic positions to that of Henry. Naturally, not all Cape Dutch had become 'essentially English', as is evident from the fact that only a few years later a major exodus of Cape Dutch out of the Cape Colony to the Highveld took place. It therefore appears that the shift towards a more anglicised culture was distinctly regional. Outlying areas of the Cape Colony, which had less interaction with the new British elite, remained Dutch in character, while individuals living within Cape Town and the immediate hinterland with close family ties to the new British elite underwent significant cultural change.

⁵³ J. Barrow, *Travels into the Interior of Southern Africa* (Cadell and Davies, London, 1806), volume 2, 109.

⁵⁴ Naturally, individual agency played a significant role in choosing to cooperate with the new government elite, or not. In an 1806 memorial written to Sir David Baird by the Mayor of Cape Town, a certain J Cloete, many did not want to remain under British control. This Cloete was made a prisoner of war in 1806 with the capitulation of Cape Town, and was destined to be sent to England for his imprisonment. In the memorial, he begs Baird to allow him to be sent to Holland for his imprisonment as his wife was Dutch and was in ill health and as such, it would be a great kindness to her, but to no avail. It serves as a stark reminder that although British occupation was cordial, occupation was accompanied by the threat that opposition would not be tolerated, CA, Colonial Office (hereafter CO) 3856, Memorials Received, 1806, no. 29.

⁵⁵ Giliomee, *Die Afrikaners*, 157.

Henry Cloete served an important role in the British imperial system. In 1845, after the British had annexed Natal, he became Recorder, or sole judge, of the new colony.⁵⁶ During the time he was stationed in the Natal Colony, four of Henry's daughters married British officers serving with their regiments at Pietermaritzburg.⁵⁷ In 1855, Cloete returned to Cape Town and was appointed third Puisne Judge and in 1858 the second Puisne Judge at the Supreme Court. In 1865, he retired to his son's house, Great Westerford.⁵⁸ Henry's eldest son trained as a surveyor and moved to London, where he died only a few months after his father. Henry's sons, William James Dundas Cloete (b3c2d2e6f3g5) and Henry Daniel Cloete (b3c2d2e6f3g10) both travelled to Europe where they married English wives.⁵⁹ Through this process of intermarriage, his descendants became completely anglicised.

Sir Abraham Josias Cloete

Henry's younger brother, Josias, was secretly moved from Holland to England after the Second British Occupation, and entered Marlow Military College where he was commissioned as a cornet at the age of 15 in 1809. He was the first member of this family to enter the British army. He returned to the Cape around the same time as his brother, in 1813, at the rank of Captain, and became the aide-de-camp of Lord Charles Somerset in 1814. His promotion to this position might have been due, on the one hand, to his family's close ties to the VOC government and, on the other hand, the fact that Josias had essentially grown up anglicised. Two years later, he was given command of an expedition to Tristan da Cunha and soon after his return to Cape Town, he was again sent to India.⁶⁰

One of the more significant events of Josias Cloete's career of interest to this study, is the fact that he played an instrumental role in landing and settling the 1820 British settlers in the eastern parts of the Cape Colony. During this time, he served as deputy-assistant quartermaster general. In 1822, he was promoted to Major upon his return to Cape Town. Josias served in various frontier wars, and in 1842 was sent with reinforcements to relieve a small force under Captain Smith that was being besieged by Boers near Port Natal, and

⁵⁶ Giliomee, *Die Afrikaners*, 130-31.

⁵⁷ J.G. Romer, 'Notes on the Cloete Family', *Familia* 1 (1964/65), 63-65 and 82.

⁵⁸ Romer, 'Notes on the Cloete Family', 63-65.

⁵⁹ Romer, 'Notes on the Cloete Family', 63-65.

⁶⁰ De Kock, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, volume 1, 170-71.

was instrumental in the negotiations with Voortrekker leaders in Port Natal while awaiting the arrival of his brother, Henry Cloete.⁶¹

In 1854, Josias travelled to England on long leave. It was during this trip that he received a knighthood, and in 1856, he was appointed Major General in command of the Windward and Leeward Islands. It is here that he married the governor's daughter, Anne Woollcombe in 1863, at the age of sixty-nine. One son would be born from this marriage, Evelyn Rivers Josias Cloete. Upon relinquishing his appointment, Cloete returned to London where he became Colonel-in-Chief of the Princess of Wales' regiment. He would hold this appointment until his death at his London home in 1886.⁶²

Over the course of a period of almost two hundred years, the Cloete family had continued to serve their government – irrespective of who was in power – with loyalty and diligence. The reasons for this close association with governmental powers, however, were surely rooted in the fact that it made social, political and economic sense for the successive generations of Cloetes to position themselves for maximum benefit. One of the most significant aspects of this family was their ability to adapt to the successive changes that took place during the tumultuous years when the Cape of Good Hope had four successive governments. Under VOC rule, we see the Cloete family as loyal subjects, yet intent on their own economic development and attempting not to get involved in conflict between the burgher population and the government – despite close family ties with some of the prominent members of the Patriot Movement. British imperialism searched for local collaborators in order to simplify the transitional process, during both the First and Second British Occupations – although it became more pronounced during the latter. Far from unseating the established landed elite, they entrenched their dominance through a system of collaboration and intermarriage.⁶³ Despite the fact that the British viewed Dutch social life and culture as inferior to their own, most of the Cape Dutch burgher elite were prepared to acquiesce to and even cooperate with British rule.⁶⁴ This is especially true for the Cloete

⁶¹ De Kock, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, volume 1, 170-71.

⁶² De Kock, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, volume 1, 170-71.

⁶³ W. Dooling, 'The Making of a Colonial Elite: Property, Family and Landed Stability in the Cape Colony, c 1750-1834', *Journal of South African Studies* 31, 1 (2005), 151 and W. Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule in South Africa* (UKZN Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2007), 16-57.

⁶⁴ R. Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750-1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999), 45-50.

family. In this family, there was a significant shift that occurred from the position of Hendrik Cloete – who was the Captain of the Burgher Cavalry of Stellenbosch during the First British Occupation and who aided the defence of the Cape – to those of his sons, and especially his grandsons, who became loyal supporters of the British Crown. The majority of these descendants married English men and women, and some even settled in Britain.⁶⁵ This new, younger generation adapted the quickest to the rapidly changing political and social landscape of the Cape during the first half of the nineteenth century.



⁶⁵ De Kock, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, volume 1, 171.

CHAPTER 6

Administrative and Judicial Change at the Cape: The Case of the Truter Family

During the period, 1795 to c. 1820, the judicial and administrative systems at the Cape of Good Hope underwent significant changes due to the political instability that characterised this period. In 1795, a British invasion ended almost 150 years of rule by the VOC administration and ushered in a period of two decades during which the government would change twice more. During the early years of the settlement under the VOC, the Council of Justice was the chief legal institution at the Cape of which the governor at first served as chair. From 1734 onwards, the *secunde* (deputy governor) was in charge of the Council of Justice with the *fiscaal* (chief legal officer) acting as prosecutor and secretary of the Council. The system changed once more in 1783 after which the Council consisted of a president, a member of the Council of Policy, six members of the Burgher Council and six Company officials.¹ This system finally changed once more after the First British Occupation of the Cape in 1795.

The First British Occupation resulted in the abolishment of the distinction between Company employees and the free-burgher population. Instead of the legislative power being vested in the Dutch East India Company, it would henceforth be vested in the new British governor. Governor Macartney, the first British governor of the Cape, was instructed not to make excessive changes to the laws of the settlement but only to introduce changes to the administration, which would be beneficial to the local economy and inhabitants.² To win the support of the burgher population residing at the Cape, the British authorities made a point of stressing the protection of private property and free trade. Admiral Craig promised that in order 'to create as little inconvenience and detriment as possible', the 'Laws, Customs, and usages, of the Inhabitants shall suffer no change'; to which he added that 'no fresh taxes shall be levied'.³ These reconciliatory tactics were an active attempt on the side of the British

¹ G.G. Visagie, *Regspleging en Reg aan die Kaap van 1652 tot 1806, met Bespreking van die Historiese Agtergrond* (Juta, Cape Town, 1969), 42-44.

² H.B. Fine, 'The Administration of Criminal Justice at the Cape of Good Hope, 1795-1828' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 1991), 464.

³ Quoted in N. Ulrich, 'Counter Power and Colonial Rule in the Eighteenth Century Cape of Good Hope: Belongings and Protest of the Labouring Poor' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of the Witwatersrand, 2011), 214.

Government to prevent any populist uprisings – particularly in a colonial outpost of which the long-term ownership was still in question.

Despite the general acceptance that the occupation of the Cape was not permanent, Governor Macartney did not agree that it was only a temporary measure of war. In a proclamation of 28 May 1797, he ordered the heads of all families to renew the oath of allegiance to the British Crown. This second request for an oath of allegiance differed from the first in that instead of limiting the oath of allegiance to the period that the Cape was under British ownership (as was stated in the 1795 oath), this detail was omitted from the 1798 oath: 'I swear that I will remain loyal to his Majesty George the third, King of Great Britain.'⁴ This 'permanent' oath led to varied reactions from the settlers living at the Cape. In effect, it meant that all former subjects of the Dutch East India Company were now subjects of the British Crown and that to give any opposition to the imposed British rule at the Cape would amount to treason.

The sentiment that British involvement at the Cape was more fixed than was generally agreed, was shared by Lady Anne Barnard who observed:

Mr Ross askd me today if I had used the words 'annexed to the British crown' when talking of the Cape. I said 'I had right or wrong. I certainly had' – he smiled & I saw I had used some feminine absurdity – I found that the Dutch woud have been angry if *I had annexed* it till higher persons on a peace say it is to be annexed – I thought whatever was conquered or by capitulation ceded & added to our dominions was annexed – this is what one gets for ones Ignorance – however no Dutch man heard me – the carriage was surrounded by English officers & unless the wits of the garrison made a Song about it I see no other harm which can ensue.⁵

At a judicial level, Macartney ordered the re-introduction of civil law and civil officers were put in place to administer the town.⁶ Although Macartney suggested that the members of the Court of Justice should be well trained in Roman-Dutch law, he retained the existing

⁴ H. Giliomee, *Die Kaap tydens die Eerste Britse Bewind, 1803-1806* (Hollandsch Afrikaansche Uitgevers Maatschappij, Cape Town, 1975), 61. My translation, original Dutch: 'Ik zweer dat ik gehouw en getrouw zal zijn aan zijne Majesteit George de Derde, Koning van Groot Brittania.'

⁵ M. Lenta, & B. Le Cordeur, (eds.), *The Cape Diaries of Lady Anne Barnard, 1799-1800* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1999), 115-16.

⁶ U.A. Seeman, 'Forts and Fortifications at the Cape Peninsula, 1781-1829' (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1993), 24.

bench, which he reduced from twelve to seven judges, and he assigned a fixed salary to each of them.⁷ Regarding administrative changes, it appears that the British government had no desire to change much, and little improvement was made during the period of the First British Occupation, as Lichtenstein claimed during the subsequent Batavian period:

During the seven years that the colony of the Cape was in the possession of England, not less than sixteen millions of pounds sterling was expended upon it by the British government, as has been asserted by several Englishmen from the most authentic documents, and yet in what a wretched condition was it when restored to Holland in 1803... The interior of the colony was meanwhile in the highest state of dilapidation, all public institutions neglected, all public buildings suffered to fall into decay. I suspect, not without good ground, that this arose very much from the English government never considering this as a permanent possession; that having resolved at a peace rather to give up the Cape than Ceylon, they were not solicitous to make improvements for the benefit of their successors. This seems proved by the little that was done notwithstanding such enormous sums were expended: time will discover whether in their second possession of it the efforts of the British government will be more happily directed.⁸

This lack of attempts at reforming the existing structures at the Cape can be attributed to the fact that there was very much a culture of uncertainty regarding the permanence of British influence at the Cape. With the conclusion of the war and the Treaty of Amiens, the Cape – which was probably seen as being of lesser importance than other colonial areas such as Ceylon – was returned to the Dutch, this time to the new revolutionary government that had come to power in the Netherlands. The Batavian Republic's peace was short-lived and war broke out once more. The Treaty of Amiens was in retrospect a three-year armistice between 1803 and 1806. General Baird was in control of the force that landed at the Cape in 1806, and he assumed the civil administration as acting governor of the Cape on 10

⁷ G.M. Theal (ed.), *Records of the Cape Colony, 1793-1831: Copied for the Cape Government, from the Manuscript Documents in the Public Record Office* (Forgotten Books Publishers, London, 2012), volume 2, 135.

⁸ H. Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa in the Years 1803, 1804, 1805 and 1806* (Henley Colburn, London, 1812), 43.

January 1806. Under his governorship, he retained most of the government officials, on condition that they swear an oath of allegiance to the British Crown.⁹

The Second British Occupation had from its start a more permanent character than the First. Administrative and economic changes were implemented rapidly, even before a formal secession of the settlement to the British Government. After 1806, the number of English civil servants increased, a start was made to modify Cape law to conform to British models, whilst at the same time the Roman-Dutch law began to assert itself as the predominant source of common law at the settlement. It is within this arena of change that one of the most important legal officials at the Cape, Sir John Truter, came to the fore.

The Truter Family - A case of Judicial Collaborators

The progenitor of the Truter family in South Africa, Johan (Jan) Andreas Truter, was born in 1694. He arrived at the Cape of Good Hope on 20 September 1722 as a soldier on board of the ship *Sleewijk*, sailing from Hellevoetsluis. On 12 October 1722, Johan was admitted to the hospital at the Cape, and decided to stay on after his recovery. After this, he served as the Head Gardener of the VOC between 1723 and 1725. On 7 March 1728, he married Margaretha Hasewinkel, although there would be no issue from this marriage since Hasewinkel died in 1732. Subsequently, on 29 September 1732, Truter married Maria Kuypermann, a Cape-born woman, and from this marriage, 14 children were born.

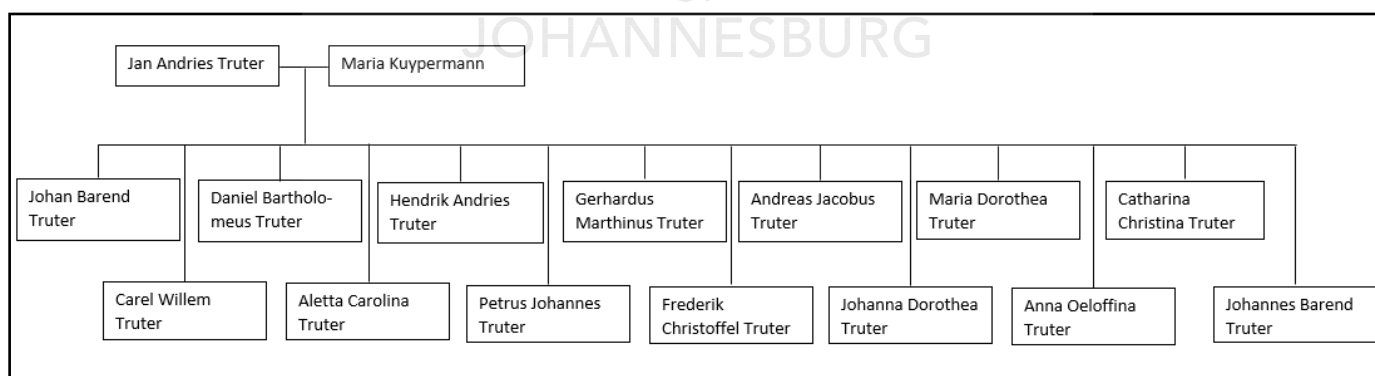


Figure 6.1: The children of Jan Andries Truter and his second wife, Maria Kuypermann.

⁹ U.A. Seeman, 'The British Military Occupation of the Cape, 1795-1815: The Case of the York Redoubt' (Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Cape Town, 2001), 28.

Hendrik Andries Truter (b5)

Hendrik Andries Truter, father of the famous Sir John Andries Truter, was the son and fifth-born child of the immigrant Jan Andreas Truter and his second wife, Maria Kuypermann. He himself played a prominent role in burgher society and was a member of both the Burgher Council and the Council of Justice.¹⁰ In addition to these high positions, Hendrik Andries was a wine *pachter* and, based on a number of applications for a bakery licence, he probably also operated a bakery in Cape Town. Hendrik Andries Truter was also one of three Burgher Councillors, known as the War Commissioners, who were appointed to provide the necessary provisions for the camp to which everything was conveyed for the defence of the Cape during the ten weeks that the Council of Policy prevented the British from taking possession of the Cape in 1795.¹¹ Later that year, Governor J.G. Graig appointed Hendrik Andries as a member of the new Burgher Senate and he further served as a member of the newly formed Court of Justice that replaced the old Council of Justice.¹² In an official report by John Barrow from 1798, he writes that Hendrik Andries Truter received an allowance from the British government in 1797 as compensation for the loss he and other office bearers suffered after the British takeover of the Cape. Barrow writes:

...it seemed but reasonable that so important a duty should be compensated by an allowance from government which was accordingly made to them in the year 1797 in the following manner:...Mr Henry Andrew Truter, 1 000 rixdollars...¹³

It is clear from his long service and prominence in both the political and judicial system that Hendrik Andries paved the way for the significant rise in prominence of his sons after the First British Occupation.

¹⁰ C.J. Beyers (ed.), *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek*, Deel 4 (Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria, 1981), 699.

¹¹ Letter from Willem Stephanus van Rijnveld to Johannes Andreas Truter, 30 June 1795, M. Boucher & N. Penn (eds.), *Britain at the Cape, 1795 to 1803* (Brenthurst Press, Johannesburg, 1992), 26. The other two War Commissioners were Willem Ferdinand van Reede van Oudtshoorn (the son of Pieter, Baron van Reede van Oudtshoorn, who died at sea before he could take up his position as governor of the Cape) and Petrus Johannes Truter, uncle of John Andries Truter, who undertook an expedition into the interior of the country and whose daughter married John Barrow.

¹² Beyers, *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordeboek*, Deel 4, 699.

¹³ Excerpt from an official report by John Barrow to George Macartney, Cape Town, 1798, Boucher & Penn, *Britain at the Cape*, 152.

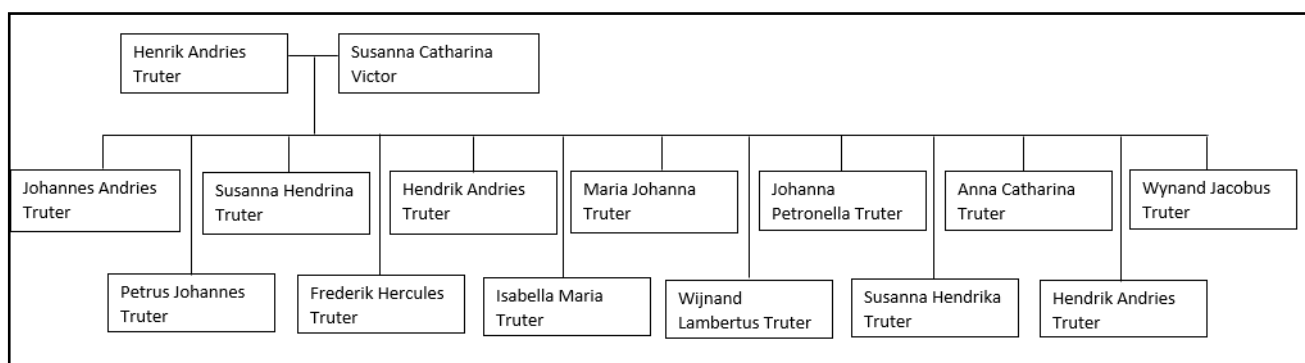


Figure 6.2: The children of Hendrik Andries Truter and his second wife, Susanna Catharina Victor.

Sir John (Johannes) Andries Truter (b5c1)

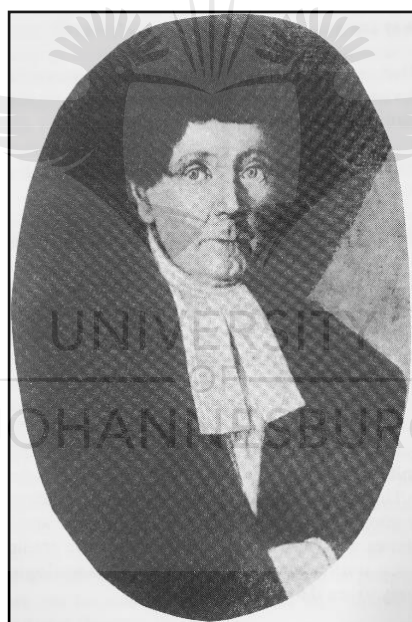


Figure 6.3: Painting of Sir John Andries Truter.¹⁴

John Andries Truter was born on 11 October 1763, the eldest son of Hendrik Andries Truter, the third son of the progenitor, and Susanna Catharina Victor.¹⁵ Johannes, as he was known at the time, received the basic public education that was available to boys of his time at the

¹⁴ M.E. Truter, *The Truter Family* (Human Science Research Council, Pretoria, 1992), 448.

¹⁵ Susanna Catharina Victor was the daughter of Wynand Victor and Susanna Verdeaux. The Victor progenitor arrived in 1666 and was originally from Amsterdam in the Netherlands.

Cape, after which he was sent to the University of Leiden. On 25 September 1787, he obtained the degree of Doctor of Law.¹⁶ By the end of his university education, he received several requests to join the Bar of the High Courts in Holland. Despite these offers, Truter decided to return to South Africa and arrived back at the Cape of Good Hope in February 1789. As opportunities in the legal profession were scarce because of the small size of the settlement at the Cape, Truter decided to join the Dutch East India Company. He joined at the rank of Junior Merchant and a new position was created to accommodate him. This position, as Second Assistant to the Fiscal, was combined with the role of Bookkeeper.¹⁷

In 1793, Truter succeeded W.S. van Rijneveld to the post of Secretary of the Court of Justice – a position that he held until 1803 when the Batavian Republic took control of the Cape. Truter therefore continued in his position of Secretary throughout the First British Occupation. At the time of the landing of Admiral Elphinstone's fleet at the Cape on 11 June 1795, Truter was in Graaff-Reinet, as we learn from a letter written by Willem Stephanus van Rijneveld to him on 30 June 1795.¹⁸ When the Batavian Government was established at the Cape, however, he did not receive the post, nor any other, until October of that year. Why this occurred, is uncertain; records simply state that 'Mr Johannes Andreas Truter ... has been fired from further service at that college.'¹⁹ It is uncertain why De Mist would have chosen not to employ Truter in order to aid with the transition between governments. After all, Truter had served in this capacity for ten years and had worked through one major government transition already. It would be too simplistic to assume some personal dislike or vendetta – in fact De Mist and Truter were closely associated though the Free Mason Lodge at the Cape, as discussed below. Perhaps Truter had tired of the position and hoped to find new employment in the Batavian government. He had after all studied extensively in the Netherlands and would have been an excellent candidate for a higher position.

In the meantime, the legislature was reformed as De Mist continued to change the existing legal structures at the Cape, and created a professional bench of lawyers as well as drawing

¹⁶ C.G. Botha, 'Sir John Andries Truter, Kt., LL.D., 1763-1845: Chief Justice of the Cape of Good Hope', *South African Law Journal* 35 (1918) 136.

¹⁷ Botha, 'Sir John Andries Truter', 137.

¹⁸ Letter from Willem Stephanus van Rijneveld to Johannes Andreas Truter, 30 June 1795 in Boucher & Penn, *Britain at the Cape*, 23.

¹⁹ S.D. Naude (ed.), *Kaapse Plakkaatboek, Deel VI (1803-1806)* (Cape Times, Cape Town, 1951), 11. My translation, original Dutch: 'Mr. Johannes Andreas Truter die van derzelve verderen dienst in dat collegie ontslagen [is]....'

up detailed rules for the Court of Justice. According to these rules, judges had to follow 'the style and practice of the Courts of Holland'.²⁰ In October 1803, Truter was appointed as Secretary to Government (or Secretary of the Council of Policy), succeeding J. H. Neethling, who had resigned because of ill health. As Secretary, he came in close contact with the Governor, General J. W. Janssens, who referred to him as 'my able and virtuous friend'.²¹ Significantly, Truter was one of the witnesses of the Articles of Capitulation that were signed by Governor Janssen and General Beresford after the Battle of Blaauwberg in 1806, which marked the start of the Second British Occupation of the Cape, after hostilities between the Batavian Republic and Great Britain had flared up once more. The most significant point in the Articles of Capitulation was that the colony surrendered to Great Britain.

Despite the prominent position that Truter played during the capitulation, some controversy surrounds him regarding the period in which the British takeover of the Cape occurred. On the evening of 6 January 1806, two of the Councillors of Policy, Vice Governor de Salis and Councillor Wakker held a secret meeting. Truter attended this meeting where it was decided that the military chest containing a sum of nearly £20 000 would be apportioned to certain Government servants as compensation for probable loss of office and expenses in going to Europe. Fourteen officials distributed the money between them, amongst them Truter. The money was later returned, almost in full.²² Despite the supposed underhanded dealings of the Councillors, Truter was held in high esteem by Governor Janssen, who wrote the following to his successor, Sir David Baird:²³

May I conclude with a most particular request, viz., that your Excellency may grant his benevolence to my able and virtuous friend the late Secretary to the Government of this Colony, Mr. J. A. Truter - he is worthy of being the friend of all honest men. Let him not be pressed to accept of a public office as long as he thinks it improper and contrary to his feelings to do so. His readiness to be useful to the Colony, consistent with the feelings of a delicate and honest man, will, whenever required by your

²⁰ Fine, 'Administration of Criminal Justice at the Cape', 467. My translation, original Dutch: 'styl en practycq voor den Hove van Holland.'

²¹ Botha, 'Sir John Andries Truter', 138.

²² Botha, 'Sir John Andries Truter', 139.

²³ Sir David Baird was a British general and the military governor of the Cape of Good Hope. In 1795, he had been involved in the First British Occupation of the Cape. In 1806, he was in command of the invasion of the Cape at the Battle of Blaauwberg.

Excellency, answer your highest expectations – I can conciliate with the idea of being unfortunate myself, but not with that of the meritorious man of this country suffering on account of his attachments and affection towards me.²⁴

When the British conquered the Cape for the second time, they found the elite of the burgher population more willing to collaborate with imperial rule than during the First British Occupation. With the promise of personal enrichment and social influence, members of the established elite worked with the new government to establish the Dutch elite in important offices of civil administration. This association also served the British occupiers well in that a smooth transition was much easier to ensure with the collaboration of the local elite. Dutch officials dominated the Court of Justice and local courts of law in the rural districts of the colony.²⁵ Some members of the burgher population had already realised the benefits of working with the new establishment during the First British Occupation. One such instance that Lady Anne Barnard refers to in her *Diaries*, is one Mr Goetz, the former Secretary. Although he had lost his position in favour of Lady Anne's husband under the new government, he established a close relationship with, and in fact was 'full of flattery for', the usurper of his position.

Half a doz. odds and ends men to dinner, amongst others Mynheer Goetz who was as usual full of flattery, he makes [much?] of it occasionally as he has prevailed on all concerned to remit to him their gains on a seizure made of a present to Mrs Goetz which the customs house officers laid hold of, & on which their penalty of 3 times the value, but his captain had not been duly informd of the laws of the colony respecting trade and the Harbour Master had not visited him being out of the way – he professes to be growing rich under the English govt.²⁶

Although it is clear that Mr Goetz was at odds in some ways with the new administration, in the way that a present to his wife had been seized by the customs offices, Lady Anne feels it necessary to note that Mr Goetz is growing rich under the English government. In the context, one might conclude that Mr Goetz benefitted from the changes made to the regulation of trade, as private trade by Company officials (such as Goetz was under the VOC) was officially forbidden, although clandestine trade certainly did occur.

²⁴ Botha, 'Sir John Andries Truter', 140.

²⁵ W. Dooling, *Slavery, Emancipation and Colonial Rule in South Africa* (University of KwaZulu-Natal Press, Pietermaritzburg, 2007), 73.

²⁶ Lenta and Le Cordeur, *Cape Diaries of Lady Anne Barnard*, 10.

For years after the Second British Occupation, Truter did not take up public office except for serving on the grain committee, which was charged with solving the shortage of grain in the colony. At this stage, he was still not a member of the Court of Justice and all but two of the members had resigned upon capitulation. Truter applied to practice as an advocate in April 1806 and continued in this practice for three years before he was offered the position of Fiscal. After the death of W.S. van Rijnveld, Truter succeeded him as Chief Justice. In 1813, writing to Lord Bathurst, Cradock called him 'a most zealous, upright, enlightened Magistrate and [in] every way worthy of unlimited confidence.'²⁷

One of the most important contributions Truter made during the Second British Occupation was his report on land tenure in the Colony. At this time, Truter was serving as Fiscal and in this position, he greatly contributed to the information contained in the proclamation that was published on 6 August 1813 that altered the laws of land tenure. In informing the Secretary of State of this new law, Sir John Cradock wrote:

I cannot close this despatch without expressing to your Lordship how much the Colonial Government feels indebted to the Chief Justice Mr. Truter upon this great and arduous subject. From the commencement of its consideration to the conclusion I have received from him the most enlightened judicious, and disinterested advice, through such assistance, I have been emboldened to proceed to the execution of measures I could not well have trusted to my own judgment alone.²⁸

His good standing with the imperial government continued, for in 1820, the governor was informed that the King had decided to confer upon Truter the honour of a knighthood, 'in consideration of his long and faithful discharge of judicial duties at the Cape of Good Hope and as a testimony of the service which His Majesty entertains of his conduct during the period of his holding the situation of Chief Justice at that Colony.'²⁹ Truter therefore became the first South African to receive a knighthood from a British monarch.

In 1819, Truter played an instrumental role in the changing of criminal procedure at the Cape. He wrote to the governor respecting the admission of appeals in criminal cases. He suggested that, 'the Mode of Procedure here, in trials for the Crown, was very defective, and

²⁷ Botha, 'Sir John Andries Truter', 150.

²⁸ Botha, 'Sir John Andries Truter', 144-45.

²⁹ Cape Archives Repository (hereafter CA), Papers Received from Secretary of State, London (hereafter GH) 1/26, General Despatches, 1820, no. 321.

often gave rise to delays and vexations which, I conceive, not only in the more liberal spirit of the English Jurisprudence, but also according to the general principles of the law of Equity, should not be suffered any longer to stain the Colonial Code.³⁰ In 1827, some eight years later, changes were made to the judicial system and old courts established under the Dutch regime were abolished. The changes to the system also allowed English and Scottish barristers to fill the bench of the court.³¹

After his retirement from public office, Truter settled in Rondebosch and devoted his attention to encouraging mission work and education.³² Despite the fact that Sir John Truter retired from public office he was appointed as a member of the Council of Government in 1828.³³ Clearly, Truter's knowledge of local affairs and customs was of significantly enough importance that he played a pivotal role in government, even at the age of 75. In his later years, he was also very active in the local community. Truter is widely accepted as the founder of the Dutch Reform Church in the Wynberg district that was established in 1829 as the third Dutch Reform Church congregation in the Cape Peninsula.³⁴ He was central in securing permission from the governor for the building of the church, as members of the congregation could not make the journey to the *Groote Kerk* in Stellenbosch often. The land for the church was given to the new congregation with the expectation that the building had to be completed within a nine-month period. Truter was afforded the honour of laying the cornerstone of the church during a ceremony that was attended by the governor, Sir Lowry Cole. In this new church, he served as *scriba* (treasurer).³⁵ In the same year, in 1829, Sir John Truter was also afforded the honour of laying the foundation stone for the Wesleyan Methodist Church that was situated at the corner of Church and Burgh streets in Cape Town.³⁶

A rather interesting note on Sir John Andries Truter's position in Cape society is that he was, although commonly regarded as an 'Angloman', in favour of the continued use of the Dutch

³⁰ Botha, 'Sir John Andries Truter', 151.

³¹ Truter, *Truter Family*, 443-44.

³² After Truter's retirement from public office, he continued to receive a pension from the British Government amounting to 600 pounds per annum, CA, GH 1/73, General Despatches, 1829, no. 1087.

³³ CA, GH 1/67, General Despatches, 1828, no. 987.

³⁴ Botha, 'Sir John Andries Truter', 153.

³⁵ Botha, 'Sir John Andries Truter', 153.

³⁶ G. Viney & P. Brooke Simons (eds.), *The Cape of Good Hope, 1806 to 1872: Aspects of the Life and Times of British Society in and around Cape Town* (Brenthurst Press, Johannesburg, 1994), 109.

language. Deputy Colonial Secretary, Henry Ellis, published a series of memoranda in an attempt to displace his immediate superior, Colonel Bird, who had married a local woman on 7 February 1800. Ellis suggested that the local system of administration at the Cape had been 'Holandized' by intermarriage between the British colonial officials and locals. One manner in which this 'Hollandization' could be altered, was to proclaim English as the language of government. It has been argued that it was this memorandum that led to the proclamation of 5 July 1822 by Governor Lord Charles Somerset, which would allow for the phasing in of English as the only language allowed in the Colony's courts and public offices.³⁷ The implementation of this plan took some time, but by 1828 court proceedings were held exclusively in English. From 1835, it was further expected that jurors had to be able to communicate with each other in English and that those who could not, would be empanelled.³⁸

There was also a push to force the use of the English language in religious instruction. In 1835, the Synod of the Dutch Reformed Church met and there was some unease regarding the use of English. In a report on the Synod, Truter wrote to Somerset that, while the members of the Synod recognised the need to promote the use of English, they were convinced that since Dutch was the 'domestic language', religious instruction could not be given in any language other than Dutch – except at the expense of the religion itself. Truter noted that there was an 'apprehension ... among the public that their children will not be allowed to receive any further instruction in Dutch, and that the language is to be totally proscribed.'³⁹ Whether Truter had any personal qualms about the general phasing-out of the Dutch language in public use, or whether he was simply reporting back as a representative of the English government is unclear, but Truter did advise against forcibly implementing English as a language of religious instruction.

Masonic Ties

Besides his civil positions, John Andries Truter was an active member of the Freemasonry movement at the Cape. Freemasonry had enjoyed remarkable growth throughout the

³⁷ R. Ross, *Status and Respectability in the Cape Colony, 1750-1870: A Tragedy of Manners* (Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 1999), 55.

³⁸ Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 56.

³⁹ Ross, *Status and Respectability*, 56.

eighteenth century with membership vested in mainly the middle and upper classes.⁴⁰ From England, Freemasonry spread to Holland in 1731 and through officials of the Dutch East India Company to the Cape. Captain Abraham van der Wyde⁴¹ arrived at the Cape on 24 April 1772 and only a few days later, on 2 May, he assembled ten masons under his presidency and they elected the master and officers. Two days later, the Lodge De Goede Hoop, the first in South Africa, was established. The new lodge depended for its existence on visitors because it failed to attract local residents, particularly because of the social and religious views of Cape society.⁴² The result was that the Lodge De Goede Hoop suspended its operations due to a scarcity of members. It only started functioning once more in 1794 and this time attracted many officials and prominent members of Cape society, among which was John Andries Truter.⁴³

When the British occupied the Cape of Good Hope for the first time in 1795, there was some dissent within the Lodge. One of the lodge members, Lieutenant Colonel De Lille was in charge of the Cape Infantry and was to defend the Cape on the road from Muizenberg. Lieutenant Colonel De Lille commanded four hundred cavalymen and was instructed to march to Muizenberg, later receiving instruction to continue his march to False Bay,⁴⁴ but on sighting the enemy, he retreated.⁴⁵ The next morning, he returned to offer resistance once more, but fled with his men as the English advanced. Burgher officers claimed that De Lille was a traitor that allowed the English easy passage to Cape Town, for which he was imprisoned in the Castle. Once the British officially took control of the Cape, De Lille entered British service as barrack master. Many suspected him of being a British spy, and refused to countenance his membership of the lodge. The situation was so unbearable that he was forced to resign in December of that year.⁴⁶ On the other hand, there was Francois

⁴⁰ A.A. Cooper, 'The Origins and Growth of Freemasonry in South Africa, 1772-1876' (Unpublished MA thesis, University of Cape Town, 1980), 5-6.

⁴¹ Van der Weyde met with an unexpected death when he 'crossed swords' with Captain Philip Cassel and died of his wounds. The event occurred around nine months after the inauguration of the Lodge and resulted in what was possibly the first masonic funeral at the Cape of Good Hope, N. Worden, 'Demanding Satisfaction: Violence, Masculinity and Honour in Eighteenth-Century Cape Town', *Kronos: South African Histories* 35 (2009), 35.

⁴² Cooper, 'Origins and Growth of Freemasonry', 7-8.

⁴³ Cooper, 'Origins and Growth of Freemasonry', 9.

⁴⁴ M. Boucher & N. Penn (eds.), *Britain at the Cape, 1795 to 1803* (Brenthurst Press, Johannesburg, 1992), 26.

⁴⁵ Cooper, 'Origins and Growth of Freemasonry', 37.

⁴⁶ Cooper, 'Origins and Growth of Freemasonry', 38.

Renier Duminy who had held the position of Grand Master of the Lodge of De Goede Hoop between 1784 and 1799. Truter succeeded him in this position. Intriguingly enough, despite the fact that many of the lodge members would later occupy prominent positions in the new government, there were also those, such as Duminy, who actively opposed British rule. Years later, during the Second British Occupation, he wrote (addressing a senior French official):

Mr. G: To all the misfortunes which befell me since the last surrender of this colony... remembered to you and to recommend to your protection myself as well as my poor children who share with me the sorrows and troubles caused by my distressing situation. I recommend them to your Excellency as the children of a devoted French citizen who has always looked for a means of rendering himself useful to his Fatherland, and who, through his attachment to this country, has sacrificed his whole fortune, declining to serve the enemies of his country and his Government, or owe them anything, which is the unpardonable crime of which I am accused by the perpetrators of my calamities. Being unable to force me to change my sentiments by their perfidious intrigues, they have used all imaginable means to rouse the Government's suspicions with regard to me and thus cause my ruin, though it was always done in a clandestine and very respectful way.⁴⁷

Despite some opposition though, members of the Lodge De Goede Hoop seemed inclined to have cordial relations with the new British rulers. On the basis that political or religious views should not hamper the greater Masonic ideals, a deputation was sent to invite masons among the British to attend the lodge. Among these masons was Admiral Elphinstone and Admiral Craig. Elphinstone did not attend, but Craig did, and was named protector of the lodge. When Lord Macartney became governor in May 1797, he too was asked to act as protector of the lodge.⁴⁸

During the First British Occupation, the influx of military lodges meant that membership to a lodge was encouraged. A military lodge, *Africa No. 1* or *De Afrikaan*, was authorised to meet by De Goede Hoop. In 1800, Richard Blake, private secretary of Sir George Yonge, formed the Royal York Lodge, which attracted senior officers of the garrison and

⁴⁷ J.L.M. Franken (ed.), *Duminy-Dagboeke / Duminy Diaries* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 1938), 185-86.

⁴⁸ Cooper, 'Origins and Growth of Freemasonry', 39.

businessmen. When the Cape came under the administration of the Batavian Republic in 1803, and Jacob Abraham de Mist arrived at the Cape, Freemasonry received an even greater impetus. De Mist was Deputy Grand Master in Holland and became the first Deputy Grand Master National Netherlandic Constitution for South Africa.⁴⁹ Prior to his return to the Netherlands, De Mist appointed John Andries Truter as his successor as Deputy Grand Master National for South Africa, a position which he held for 41 years until his death. Truter's Masonic ties served him well over the course of the multiple changes of government, and when the British occupied the Cape for a second time, Truter found an ally in the Commander-in-Chief, Major General David Baird who was also a mason. Most of the members of the De Goede Hoop lodge retained their positions in the new British administration, despite the change of government.⁵⁰

The Dutch lodges were under a common authority, that of the Deputy District Grand Master National Truter. As new permanent lodges were established in the Cape, they did not have equal authority. Therefore, in 1826, at the request of the United Grand Lodge of England, Truter agreed to take on another title – that of the English Provincial Grand Master in South Africa.⁵¹

Masonic historian, E. Smith, wrote on the ideology of Masonry that it

is a system of morality based on a belief in the existence of God, the immortality of the soul, and the brotherhood of man: therefore, no atheist can be made a mason. It strives to teach a man the duty he owes to God, to his country, to his family, to his neighbour and to himself. It inculcates the practice of every virtue and makes an extensive use of symbolism in its teachings. It interferes with neither religion nor politics but strives only after light and truth, endeavouring always to bring out the highest and noblest qualities of men.⁵²

Within this context, the argument can be made that Truter's greater aim was to uphold these ideals of striving only 'after light and truth', irrespective of his feelings regarding the political upheaval that occurred during his lifetime. In fact, it appears that Truter's anglicisation was not necessarily only a means of surviving the upheavals caused by successive changes in government between 1795 and 1806, but was perhaps an active attempt at achieving what

⁴⁹ Cooper, 'Origins and Growth of Freemasonry', 10.

⁵⁰ Cooper, 'Origins and Growth of Freemasonry', 11.

⁵¹ Cooper, 'Origins and Growth of Freemasonry', 11.

⁵² Quoted in Cooper, 'Origins and Growth of Freemasonry', 1.

he might well have considered the 'higher ideals' of the important principles laid out by Masonic doctrine (influenced by Enlightenment reasoning). In addition, it appears possible that Masonic ideals bridged the divide, first between the Cape Dutch and the occupying British during the First British Occupation, when ties between Masons of different political orientations ensured closer relationships between the two groups, as in the instance of the status of both Admiral Craig and Lord Macartney. Under the Batavian Government, the transition was again aided by shared ideas and ideology, since De Mist was himself a senior member of the Freemasons. Finally, the Second British Occupation again saw a fluent transition thanks to the influence of John Truter, as he continued to be a much-respected member of the Court of Justice and as Fiscal.

The De Wet Extended Family

John Andries Truter's wife, Sophia Alida de Wet,⁵³ was the daughter of Hendrik Justinus de Wet and was part of the prominent De Wet family. The couple were married on 22 November 1789. She was the niece of O.G. de Wet, president of the Supreme Court and a prominent 'Angloman' during the period of the First British Occupation.⁵⁴ Olof Godlieb de Wet was born in Cape Town in 1739.⁵⁵ Initially he was employed by the VOC and became an assistant of the Orphan Chamber. By 1768, he was named deputy fiscal with the rank of bookkeeper.⁵⁶

His influence within the VOC establishment was significant, and in 1778, he became a member of the Council of Justice. As an example of the favour that De Wet enjoyed within the VOC structures: he was asked to accompany Governor Joachim van Plettenberg on his tour of the north-eastern districts in September 1778. Following the tour, on 15 December 1778, he succeeded Marthinus Adrianus Bergh as *landdrost* of Stellenbosch and

⁵³ In addition to O.G. de Wet, the De Wet family had numerous ties to the judicial elite at the Cape. Sir John Truter's sister-in-law was married to the advocate Daniël Denysen who also studied in Leiden and served as a judge during the Batavian period at the Cape, D.W. Krüger & C.J. Beyers (eds.), *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Volume 3 (Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town, 1977), 213.

⁵⁴ D.W. Krüger (ed.), *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Volume 2 (Human Sciences Research Council, Cape Town, 1972), 191.

⁵⁵ The progenitor of the De Wet family, Jacobus de Wet served as *adelborst* in the VOC and arrived in Table Valley in 1693. Olof Godlieb de Wet was the grandchild of this progenitor. O.G. de Wet's mother, Maria Magdalena Blankenberg, was the daughter of Johannes Blankenberg, H.C. de Wet, *Family De Wet: 300 Years* (E.F. De Wet, Johannesburg, 2001), 13 and Krüger & Beyers, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, Vol 2, 191.

⁵⁶ Krüger, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, volume 2, 192.

Drakenstein (Paarl). So entrenched was De Wet within the VOC establishment, that during the Patriot Movement he was referred to as the 'governor's minion'. Despite this criticism, De Wet continued to be advanced, and became first named secretary of the Council of Justice and later president of this Council. In addition, he also served as a member of the Council of Policy from 1793 onwards.⁵⁷

As with Sir John Andries Truter, De Wet played a prominent role in the Freemasons at the Cape, and was one of the founders of Lodge De Goede Hoop, the first Masonic Lodge in Cape Town. By the time of the First British Occupation, De Wet was certainly one of the most prominent officials of the VOC establishment. As such, on 16 September 1795 he was one of the signatories of the articles of cession to the British. Perhaps because of his considerable knowledge of the political and judicial systems of the Cape, he retained his position as the president of the Council of Justice for the entire duration of the First British Occupation.

In April 1795, De Wet was sent to Graaff-Reinet by Commissioner-General A.J. Sluysken to investigate allegations made by burghers against *landdrost* Maynier. In addition, the burghers insisted on taking action against the Xhosa, which was something De Wet attempted to avoid. He furthermore declined to visit the eastern frontier to witness for himself the damage done by the Xhosa. It is reasonable to think that De Wet's decision not to support the grievances of the burghers on the eastern frontier made him very unpopular with the people of that area because on 16 June 1795 he was ordered to leave the district.

De Wet resigned his position as Chief Justice on 28 March 1803 after the Batavian government took control of the Cape, indicating that this resignation was apparently due to political reasons, and sailed for England. He returned the following year and was appointed to the commercial court but he sailed once more for England the very same year, apparently to visit his only daughter, Sara Fehrsen. He only returned in 1807, when he was once more appointed Chief Justice in the government of the Second British Occupation.⁵⁸

⁵⁷ Krüger, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, volume 2, 192.

⁵⁸ Krüger, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, volume 2, 192.

The Truter Cousins

Anna Maria Truter



Figure 6.4: Anna Maria Truter, cousin of Sir John Andries Truter. This portrait was likely painted by her husband, Sir John Barrow, c. 1820.⁵⁹

Anna Maria Truter was born on 17 August 1777 in the Cape Colony as the daughter of Petrus Johannes Truter⁶⁰ and Johanna Ernestina Blankenberg.⁶¹ Anna Maria was particularly well known for her watercolour paintings of early Cape flowers, scenery and buildings, and is commonly recognised as the first Cape-born botanical artist.⁶² By the time she left the Cape in 1803, she had assembled the first known portfolio of Cape botanical

⁵⁹ Truter, *Truter Family*, 468.

⁶⁰ Petrus was the sixth son of Jan Andries Truter and Maria Kuyperman, making him an uncle to Sir John Andries Truter. Anna Maria Truter and Petrus Johannes Truter were therefore first cousins to Sir John.

⁶¹ Johanna Ernestina was the daughter of Johannes Hendricus Blankenberg and his wife, Anna Margaretha van der Heyde. Johannes Hendricus was the brother of Maria Magdalena Blankenberg who was the father of O.G. De Wet. Therefore, the De Wet family, the Truter family and the Blankenberg family are connected by marriage in multiple instances.

⁶² Some of these paintings are on display at the Africana Museum in Johannesburg.

sketches. She married the well-known writer and British official, John Barrow, in 1799.⁶³ Her marriage to Barrow must have been quite a surprise, as Barrow had a reputation for making rather scathing remarks about the Dutch inhabitants of the Cape. Lichtenstein writes about this:

Mr: Barrow, who pronounced so harsh a judgment upon the women of the Cape, afterwards confuted himself in the most forcible manner, by marrying one a short time before his departure, whom he took with him to England; an example followed by no inconsiderable number of his countrymen. He who would form a more accurate judgment of the African women, who would not consider their want of higher cultivation as a reproach, but would make all proper allowances for that slight degree of ruggedness which is the inevitable effect of their education and of local circumstances, would find them for the most part amiable and worthy of respect.⁶⁴

Interestingly enough, Lady Anne Barnard also discussed the liaison between Anna Maria Truter and John Barrow in her Diaries:

How much [Mr Barrow] is changd since I knew him first here, his manners then were open & very good humoured full of intelligence easily & pleasantly given and his mind stored with Alacrity, Hope and Emulation... he went to Graaf Renet [*sic*] & father delighting in the journey – tired soon after he sett out – fancied he wishd to return to Miss Trutor [*sic*] – found the country interesting & a thousand circumstances of novelty in it worth narrating or flat, stupid & nothing fit to be taken notice of almost according as he was in or out of humour – returnd - & I instead of finding my friend come back to see myself hardly acquainted – dissatisfied with every thing but with the company of Miss Trutor, if love makes all those changes why does he not make one more by making a married man of him – the lady is willing – he is now possessed of a Handsome Income, a thousand pr an: and there is not any reason why he should

⁶³ John Barrow accompanied Lord Macartney on a two-year mission to China in 1792, which established a lasting relationship between the two men. When Macartney was appointed as governor of the Cape Colony he was accompanied by Barrow, who served as his secretary. He stayed at the Cape between 1797 and 1803 during which he wrote his accounts of the interior of South Africa and after which he returned to England. Once back in England, he was appointed as second secretary to the Admiralty in 1804 and continued work in this post for 40 years. In this position, he wielded considerable political and social influence, Krüger, *Dictionary of South African Biography*, volume 2, 34.

⁶⁴ Lichtenstein, *Travels in Southern Africa*, 124.

not marry rather than burn if he pleases – to be sure he knows we all think it a bad move for an English man to marry a Dutch woman, but what of that he thinks it a good one: I fancy the state of his mind is somewhat that of the Game ‘he woud, and he woud not’.⁶⁵

The marriage between John Barrow and Anna Maria took place on 26 August 1799 in spite of Barrow’s dislike for the Cape Dutch and it being a ‘bad move for an English man to marry a Dutch woman’, as Lady Anne claimed.⁶⁶ The couple had seven children, one of whom would also marry a Cape Dutch woman.

Petrus Johannes Truter

Petrus Johannes Truter was the son of Johanna Ernestina Blankenberg and Petrus Johannes Truter, and the brother of Anna Maria Truter. Like his cousin, Sir John Truter, he studied in the Netherlands where he stayed for fifteen years before returning to the Cape where he became very actively involved in the civil and judicial administration of the settlement. On his return to the Cape in 1799, he first practiced as a medical doctor in Tulbagh. In 1812, during the Second British Occupation, he was appointed customs officer in Simon’s Town.⁶⁷ He eventually resigned from this position in 1819 due to a lack of suitable schools for his children in Simon’s Town. In the same year, he became a member of the Court of Justice in which capacity he served until 1827, when the Court was dissolved and the legal system restructured. Petrus Johannes’ British connections served him well during the Second British Occupation. His appointment as customs officer had him earning a salary of £1 400 per year, a position that was acquired with considerable assistance by Truter’s brother-in-law, Sir John Barrow. In addition, this line of the Truter family continued to intermarry with the newly arrived British at the Cape.⁶⁸

For example, Petrus Johannes’ eldest daughter, Johanna Catharina Auguste, married Reverend Robert E. Shand in 1839. Shand was originally from Turiff in Scotland.⁶⁹ Their two children, John Shand and Catherine Gordon, both anglicised completely. His second daughter married General Edward Armstrong while his son, Petrus Johannes Schindeler Truter married Margaret Roberts of Inverurie in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. The Scottish

⁶⁵ Lenta & Le Cordeur, *Cape Diaries of Lady Anne Barnard*, 75-76.

⁶⁶ Lenta & Le Cordeur, *Cape Diaries of Lady Anne Barnard*, 76.

⁶⁷ CA, GH 23/5, General Dispatches, 1814, no. 3.

⁶⁸ Beyers, *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordboek*, Deel 4, 663.

⁶⁹ Beyers, *Suid-Afrikaanse Biografiese Woordboek*, Deel 4, 663.

connection continued when his third daughter married William Robertson of Aberdeenshire in Scotland. Two more daughters, Sophia Catharina and Emerentia Anna would marry Colonel John Rhode and James Barrow respectively. Significantly, James Barrow was their cousin and the son of Sir John Barrow and his Truter wife, Anna Maria. It appears that the apparent unease his father had initially felt towards the Cape Dutch did not deter his son from likewise marrying into the established Dutch elite at the Cape.

Prominent figures in Cape Dutch society such as Sir John Truter had to find ways to straddle the changes in government that occurred between 1795 and 1820. Interestingly enough, the Truter family were able to weather the storms of the changes in government, on the one hand because of their family connections, but more significantly because of their social position, on the other hand. Sir John Andries Truter had proven himself invaluable to all the administrations, and as such managed to continue to rise in power, even though his own family nucleus did not significantly intermarry with the newly established British elite. This might suggest that his ties to the Freemasons at the Cape did play some role in his continued influence, as we see the leaders of the successive governments were themselves members of the Freemasons. As Deputy Grand Master, he would have wielded considerable influence on both the Dutch and the English lodges at the Cape. His extended family managed to secure some influence through their English marriages, as is evident from the marriage of his cousin to Sir John Barrow, as well as her brother's family ties to a number of Scottish families. Therefore, although it may appear as if the Truter family complex maintained some degree of emotional attachment to their Dutch culture and language, they and all around them were loyal to the British Government and fared exceedingly well under British rule.

CHAPTER 7

Conclusion

The study was performed within the context of 'new cultural history' that aims to uncover past experiences through the lived reality of ordinary individuals. This was achieved through the theoretical lens of elite formation theory and the theory of social stratification, according to which society will naturally categorise people into socioeconomic strata based on a number of factors, including income, social status or derived power. By c. 1820, following several changes in government at the Cape of Good Hope, there existed a new social and economic elite made up of both English and Dutch families. Some of these originally Dutch families managed to survive the transitional period while other prominent families disappeared into obscurity. The family complexes who did survive, managed to adapt to the new governments at the Cape through various forms of collaboration. This collaboration went hand-in-hand with intermarriage between the Dutch burgher elite, who were already firmly established by the time of the First British Occupation in 1795, and the occupying forces. This trend is apparent in the examples of the three major family complexes that formed the basis of this study. Each family complex provides unique insight into the mentality of the period, and gives us a greater understanding of the effects of this period of changes in regime.

The Cloete family serves as an excellent example of the 'archetypal' VOC family. The progenitor had arrived at the Cape in service of the VOC in 1657, making the Cloete family the oldest family complex in this study. The Cloete family are a good example of how the burgher population managed to establish themselves at the Cape. They were one of the family complexes that did exceedingly well in agriculture, and eventually established themselves as part of the burgher elite. Yet, despite their early settlement at the Cape and well-established relationships with the VOC, this family complex was one of the most significant to collaborate with the British. Chapter 4, on the Cloete family, sheds light on the operation of local collaboration with a new political elite through means of intermarriage and social and economic co-operation with the new political elites.

The Van Reenen family complex served as an interesting example of the mercantile elite that established themselves at the Cape. Over the course of the different generations, discussed in chapter 5, the Van Reenen family's mercantile activities became extensive and diversified. This chapter provides insight into the effects of regime change on economic

activities at the Cape, but is also an interesting indicator of how some members of the Van Reenen family ingratiated themselves with the new British elite, while others avoided the new establishment as best they could. The chapter on this family complex shows the operation of individual agency of the burghers, and how some individuals acted according to their own sets of values and not always in accordance with what would be economically and socially beneficial.

The final core chapter of this thesis dealt with the Truter family, who are significant mainly for the administrative collaboration with the British powers that its most prominent member, Sir John Truter, is known for. This chapter further provides insight into the complexity of the period – when it was essential that there be some form of stability and continuation in the local government, Truter provided the service, even though it is possible that he did not cherish particularly pro-British sentiments. Very few of his family members intermarried with the new British elite, and he himself was opposed to the language reforms that the British later attempted to introduce. Yet he served the British government faithfully for decades, and received a knighthood and pension for his efforts.

The research for this study utilised prosopographical methods in order to establish a collective biography for each family complex, based on shared denominators. This was performed in conjunction with basic genealogical research to establish the various contacts between relevant individuals. These interactions included their social relationships, marriages between different groups, their economic co-operation and wider network of interaction. Once the connections between individuals were established, micro-historical approaches were applied in order to gain greater insight into the social structures of these individuals. By looking at these individuals as small units of research, the study was able to establish a more nuanced understanding of the burgher population living at the Cape during the period of transitional governments covered by this thesis.

This study has aimed to shed light on the social realities of a period of South African history that has lately received relatively little attention. The thesis unpacks the complexities of the Dutch settled society at the Cape between 1795 and c. 1820, and establishes that co-operation between the burgher elite and the new government elite was in fact widespread. Although opposition to the British did exist, it was mutually more beneficial for the elite to accommodate, if not welcome, the British during both the First and the Second Occupations. For some families, such as the Cloetes in particular, this welcoming of the British elite

resulted in a process of anglicisation over the course of only a couple of decades. This change in the cultural character of the Cloete family can be attributed to the large number of marriages that happened between British subjects and members of the Cloete family – a pattern that in the end completely changed the character of the Cloete family. The same trend has been established for the Van Reenen family, although to a lesser extent than that of the Cloetes. What is significant about the Van Reenen family, however, is that it appears that there was a tendency amongst Van Reenen women to form close relationships with the new British elite. These relationships – as in the case of someone like Mrs Baumgardt – ranged from sexual relationships with British officers to cordial relationships with individuals belonging to the British government. Close association with the new elite at the Cape would have had marked benefits for these individuals, as in the case of Mr Baumgardt receiving political advancement under the British government. The suggestion, therefore, might rather be that traditional Dutch families belonging to the burgher elite or landed gentry, as Robert Ross has termed it, did not necessarily have ‘disappeared’ in 1830s and 1840s, but rather have changed in character. Members of the old Dutch burgher elite might therefore rather have morphed over the course of a couple of generations into a Cape-British elite, through means of intermarriage. This process is one that deserves fuller investigation as it can shed important light on the relationship between colonies and the metropole in creating new colonial elites.

Nonetheless, in spite of extensive intermarriage that occurred amongst the burgher *elite*, it appears that a significant number of the poorer Dutch inhabitants of the Cape were actively opposed to the British Occupation. By 1841, Alexey Butakov, a Russian visitor to the Cape, wrote of the relationship between the English and the Dutch:

The society of Cape Town and the entire Colony is divided into two halves that will never merge into a harmonious whole: the British and the Dutch, who comprise the majority of the white population. The Dutch hate their conquerors profoundly and passionately, because their hatred is powerless; the British repay them with a deepest and most offensive contempt. But they both agree on two points: their passion for Freemason lodges and for converting the pagan inhabitants...¹

¹ B. Gorelik (ed.), *An Entirely Different World: Russian Visitors to the Cape, 1797-1870* (Van Riebeeck Society, Cape Town, 2015), 46.

Yet this divide seems to have existed mainly between the general population and not amongst the elite. Bird, for his part, reports in 1822:

...but the habits of the Dutch and English are not as yet sufficiently amalgamated to allow them to associate and mix in the same free manner as is usual with individuals of common stock. The *heads* of the society of each nation dine together, very much in the English style...²

It appears, therefore, that already by 1822, there existed a form of truce in the relationship between the burgher and political or administrative elites that allowed for much greater interaction and association between these two groups. This association, as Bird notes, was based on the Dutch mixing with the English 'in the English style', presumably by adopting English manners and customs, and therefore becoming more like the British elite in order to facilitate this interaction. As discussed earlier, Bird also comments on intermarriage between the British and the Dutch – and significantly, he points out the role of women as agents of this intermarriage:

Only one British lady has yet honoured a Cape-Dutch gentleman with her hand. From his European and professional education, and the consequence and habits of his family, attached to English manners, customs and society, he can hardly be considered in any other light but that of an Englishman. Very frequent marriages take place between English gentlemen and Cape ladies...³

Interestingly, Bird here also notes that there was some form of cultural amalgamation on the side of the Dutch in order to associate with the British, as is indicated in his description of the Dutch-speaking man in the passage above. It is almost more of a defence of individual virtues and qualities by stating that he 'cannot be considered in any other light than that of an Englishman.' This quote also points to the extent that anglicisation had occurred by the 1820s, both culturally and through intermarriage by Dutch women to English men. How the rest of the Cape's population viewed these changes, should be a topic for further investigation.

² W. Bird, *State of the Cape of Good Hope in 1822* (Murray, London, 1823), 164.

³ Bird, *State of the Cape*, 170-171.

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CJ *Council of Justice*

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CO *Colonial Office*

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M *Miscellaneous Documents*

M 1/239: Survey Map, 1811

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MOIC 2/10: Insolvent and Distribution Accounts, 1804

MOOC *Master of the Orphan Chamber*²

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